

Poetry Writing

Walsh

Student samples: the sonnet

These are student samples for you to examine; decide what you think about their strengths and weaknesses, and use them to decide more firmly what you want to do and not to do in your own poems.

A Figure Lost

A figure in the mirror staring back,  
her eyes the blue and cream of foam on waves,  
in one reflected moment runs away,  
her cryptic orbs now memories I lack.  
But maybe 'twas the boy with humble tact  
among the hidden shadows of his grave,  
for surely 'twas his rapt sight that I craved  
between the broken time of hour-glass cracks.

And was it fear that made me see the face,  
the eyes bewildered throwing me a glance?  
And should I look beside me to embrace  
the one I never really gave a chance?  
And even thought his crisp eyes left no trace,  
did I find here the rapture of romance.  
--Nellie Berkman

My Figure Found

I galloped quickly down the jagged stairs,  
and through the back door screen in a descent  
into the dusty yard, and still intent,  
in hopes to find my figure waiting there.  
Staccato-breathed I slumped with great despair,  
and tried to smell his cinnamon sweet scent  
upon the frozen ground, like years we spent  
in tug-of-war embraces, cold and bare.

But soon my tingling feet found warmth and rose,  
my soul pulled puppet-like out from my heart.  
So dodging slithering roots I found our tree,  
from under which our first kiss was enclosed.  
Within the shadowed limbs two eyes glowed dark,  
a rim of ivory white winked back at me.  
--Nellie Berkman

## Bittersweet Goodbye

The sunset glared and highlighted the tear  
that fell as she had closed her eyes to try  
escaping love she felt when he was near,  
though all he did was stare and often sigh.

She said they'd always be together, flee  
from life so desolate and just unkind.  
But now she's packed, eyes closed she gave the key  
they held to find their dreams, unleash their minds.

They gazed into each other's wondering eyes  
heads full of questions old from asking why  
it happened, why this moment packed with lies  
held deep within had let them say goodbye.

He loved, he lost, he felt his heart's dismay,  
though torn and so afraid she made her way.  
--Samantha Johnson

## Birth of Ideal

The mantis clings, suspended by a whim.  
She can't be seen, beneath the bending blade.  
Her only fear the turgid abdomen,  
The gray-toned birth that's muted by the jade.  
A woman sobs and holds onto the bed.  
The stretch of birth confuses a new bride.  
The doctor's hands do coax the tender head.  
Who can know the glory deep inside?  
The mind burns hot and thoughts do ere increase!  
Electric impulse pushes every end.  
You clashing passions! Will you never cease?  
These spirits weave and I cannot defend.  
The challenge of expression is my plague!  
And no! I fear my words become too vague!

--Cameron Seher

## Untitled

The winter breeze cooled down my burning tongue  
And frostbit my already frozen thoughts.  
My mind was tied in convoluted knots;  
Quick, hurried breaths filled but a single lung.  
Had clouds above unleashed a thunderous blast,  
Had everything in sight turned into stone,  
Had I begun to move ten times as fast,  
I swear, I couldn't possibly have known.  
So when she turned to me and softly spoke,  
No comprehension did my brain possess,  
And, still, my heart, her warm, sweet breath awoke,  
And in my mind I answered her request.  
But as her secret strand of hair was shed,  
My lips were sewn together with this thread.

--Nir Yungster

## An Unfortunate Farewell

The tainted breath and wish of those who lie  
are doomed to ruin within the sea of soil.  
For six by six by six around them coil  
the worms and dirt and mother's tearful cry.  
Abandoned by her greatest friend, left asking why,  
she says farewell. Her voice immersed in toil  
as vows she screams to stay forever loyal.  
Her heart's aware it's just an empty sigh.

She dedicates her words and drops a rose,  
demanding them returned in seconds straight.  
It's not the rose itself her heart so craves,  
for once the box is for the last time closed,  
the beauty's lost. Her words do not relate,  
except to her, the one she could not save.

--Ellen Murphy

## Untitled

The day will come when death will cut life's ties.  
So let us live, not waste our time with talk.  
For when the sun has set, the moon will rise;  
The birds return to nest, the lambs to flocks.  
So walk with me across a thousand acres  
With purple clouds above us in the heat.  
The raindrops, the life-givers and life-takers  
Will fall upon the ground beside our feet.  
Come wander down a thousand gray dirt roads  
By stalks of wheat and ears of yellow corn.  
By wagons bearing hay in heavy loads,  
We'll find a tiny kitten newly born.  
But soon the hay will rot, the wagons rust.  
The corn, the wheat, and we will turn to dust.

--Grace Snow