

**Sonnet 75*****Edmund Spenser***

One day I wrote her name upon the strand,  
But came the waves and washèd it away:  
Again I wrote it with a second hand,  
But came the tide, and made my pains his prey.  
"Vain man," said she, "that dost in vain assay,  
A mortal thing so to immortalize,  
For I myself shall like to this decay,  
And eek my name by wipèd out likewise."  
"Not so," quod I, "let baser things devise,  
To die in dust, but you shall live by fame.  
My verse your virtues rare shall eternize,  
And in the heavens write your glorious name.  
Where whenas death shall all the world subdue,  
Our love shall live, and later life renew."

**Sonnet 73*****William Shakespeare***

That time of year thou mayst in me behold  
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang  
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,  
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.  
In me thou seest the twilight of such day  
As after sunset fadeth in the west,  
Which by and by black night doth take away,  
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.  
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire  
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,  
As the death-bed whereon it must expire  
Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by.  
This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,  
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

**Ozymandias**  
**Percy Bysshe Shelley**

I met a traveler from an antique land  
Who said: two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,  
half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown  
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed;  
And on the pedestal these words appear  
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:  
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!"  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

**Historical Note:** Ozymandias is the Greek name of Ramses II, the pharaoh who was an arrogant tyrant and master of propaganda—claiming to have single-handedly saved his troops from a Hittite ambush (a battle his army actually lost), calling himself Ramses the Great, and building monuments to himself across Egypt.

**Nothing Gold Can Stay**  
**Robert Frost**

Nature's first green is gold,  
Her hardest hue to hold.  
Her early leaf's a flower;  
But only so an hour.  
Then leaf subsides to leaf.  
So Eden sank to grief,  
So dawn goes down to day.  
Nothing gold can stay.

**Mirror**  
**Sylvia Plath**

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.  
Whatever I see I swallow immediately  
Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.  
I am not cruel, only truthful—  
The eye of a little god, four-cornered.  
Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.  
It is pink, with speckles. I have looked at it so long  
I think it is a part of my heart. But it flickers.  
Faces and darkness separate us over and over.

Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me,  
Searching my reaches for what she really is.  
Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.  
I see her back, and reflect it faithfully.  
She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.  
I am important to her. She comes and goes.  
Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.  
In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman  
Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish.

**A Litany in Time of Plague**  
**Thomas Nashe**

Adieu, farewell, earth's bliss;  
This world uncertain is;  
Fond are life's lustful joys;  
Death proves them all but toys;  
None from his darts can fly;  
I am sick, I must die.  
Lord, have mercy on us!

Rich men, trust not in wealth,  
Gold cannot buy you health;  
Physic himself must fade.  
All things to end are made,  
The plague full swift goes by;  
I am sick, I must die.  
Lord, have mercy on us!

Beauty is but a flower  
Which wrinkles will devour;  
Brightness falls from the air;  
Queens have died young and fair;  
Dust hath closed Helen's eye.  
I am sick, I must die.  
Lord, have mercy on us!

Strength stoops unto the grave,  
Worms feed on Hector brave;  
Swords may not fight with fate,  
Earth still holds open her gate.  
"Come, come!" the bells do cry.  
I am sick, I must die.  
Lord, have mercy on us!

Wit with his wantonness  
Tasteth death's bitterness;  
Hell's executioner  
Hath no ears for to hear  
What vain art can reply.  
I am sick, I must die.  
Lord, have mercy on us!

Haste, therefore, each degree,  
To welcome destiny;  
Heaven is our heritage,  
Earth but a player's stage;  
Mount we unto the sky.  
I am sick, I must die.  
Lord, have mercy on us!

## **To His Coy Mistress**

*Andrew Marvell*

Had we but world enough, and time,  
This coyness, lady, were no crime.  
We would sit down, and think which way  
To walk, and pass our long love's day.  
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side  
Shouldst rubies find: I by the tide  
Of Humber would complain. I would  
Love you ten years before the flood,  
And you should, if you please, refuse  
Till the conversion of the Jews;  
My vegetable love should grow  
Vaster than empires and more slow;  
An hundred years should go to praise  
Thine eyes, and on they forehead gaze;  
Two hundred to adore each breast,  
But thirty thousand to the rest;  
An age at least to every part,  
And the last age should show your heart.  
For, lady, you deserve this state;  
Nor would I love at lower rate.

But at my back I always hear  
Time's wing'd chariot hurrying near;  
And yonder all before us lie  
Deserts of vast eternity.  
Thy beauty shall no more be found,  
Nor in thy marble vault shall sound  
My echoing song; then worms shall try  
That long preserved virginity;  
And your quaint honor turn to dust,  
And into ashes all my lust:  
The grave's a fine and private place,  
But none, I think, do there embrace.

Now therefore, while the youthful hue  
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,  
And while thy willing soul transpires  
At every pore with instant fires,  
Now let us sport us while we may,  
And now, like amorous birds of prey,  
Rather at once our time devour  
Than languish in his slow-chapped power,  
Let us roll all our strength and all  
Our sweetness up into one ball,  
And tear our pleasures with rough strife  
Through the iron gates of life:  
Thus, though we cannot make our sun  
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

## **Fern Hill**

*Dylan Thomas*

Now as I was young and easy under the apple boughs  
About the lilting house and happy as the grass was green,  
    The night above the dingle starry,  
        Time let me hail and climb  
    Golden in the heydays of his eyes,  
And honoured among wagons I was prince of the apple towns  
And once below a time I lordly had the trees and leaves  
    Trail with daisies and barley  
    Down the rivers of the windfall light.

And as I was green and carefree, famous among the barns  
About the happy yard and singing as the farm was home,  
    In the sun that is young once only,  
        Time let me play and be  
    Golden in the mercy of his means,  
And green and golden I was huntsman and herdsman, the calves  
Sang to my horn, the foxes on the hills barked clear and cold,  
    And the sabbath rang slowly  
    In the pebbles of the holy streams.

All the sun long it was running, it was lovely, the hay  
Fields high as the house, the tunes from the chimneys, it was air  
    And playing, lovely and watery  
        And fire green as grass.  
    And nightly under the simple stars  
As I rode to sleep the owls were bearing the farm away,  
All the moon long I heard, blessed among stables, the nightjars  
    Flying with the ricks, and the horses  
        Flashing into the dark.

And then to awake, and the farm, like a wanderer white  
With the dew, come back, the cock on his shoulder: it was all  
    Shining, it was Adam and maiden,  
        The sky gathered again  
    And the sun grew round that very day.  
So it must have been after the birth of the simple light  
In the first, spinning place, the spellbound horses walking warm  
    Out of the whinnying green stable  
        On to the fields of praise.

And honoured among foxes and pheasants by the gay house  
Under the new made clouds and happy as the heart was long,  
    In the sun born over and over,  
        I ran my heedless ways,  
    My wishes raced through the house high hay  
And nothing I cared, at my sky blue trades, that time allows  
In all his tuneful turning so few and such morning songs  
    Before the children green and golden  
        Follow him out of grace,

Nothing I cared, in the lamb white days, that time would take me  
Up to the swallow thronged loft by the shadow of my hand,  
    In the moon that is always rising,  
        Nor that riding to sleep  
    I should hear him fly with the high fields  
And wake to the farm forever fled from the childless land.  
Oh as I was young and easy in the mercy of his means,  
    Time held me green and dying  
        Though I sang in my chains like the sea.