

The Poet's Craft with Mindy Mangot

August 10 at 3pm

Poem Compilation (4 total and also 1 bibliography on writing)

A Valentine For Ernest Mann by Naomi Shihab Nye

You can't order a poem like you order a taco.  
Walk up to the counter, say, "I'll take two"  
and expect it to be handed back to you  
on a shiny plate.

Still, I like your spirit.  
Anyone who says, "Here's my address,  
write me a poem," deserves something in reply.  
So I'll tell you a secret instead:  
poems hide. In the bottoms of our shoes,  
they are sleeping. They are the shadows  
drifting across our ceilings the moment  
before we wake up. What we have to do  
is live in a way that lets us find them.

Once I knew a man who gave his wife  
two skunks for a valentine.  
He couldn't understand why she was crying.  
"I thought they had such beautiful eyes."  
And he was serious. He was a serious man  
who lived in a serious way. Nothing was ugly  
just because the world said so. He really  
liked those skunks. So, he reinvented them  
as valentines and they became beautiful.  
At least, to him. And the poems that had been hiding  
in the eyes of the skunks for centuries  
crawled out and curled up at his feet.

Maybe if we reinvent whatever our lives give us  
we find poems. Check your garage, the odd sock  
in your drawer, the person you almost like, but not quite.  
And let me know.

Naomi Shihab Nye, born in 1952, is a poet and novelist of Palestinian-American heritage. In 2019 the Poetry Foundation designated her the Young People's Poet Laureate. She is an editor of the Sunday *New York Times* Poetry column and the recipient of many prestigious awards. She has published over 2 dozen books.

**Let Evening Come** by Jane Kenyon

Let the light of late afternoon  
shine through chinks in the barn, moving  
up the bales as the sun moves down.

Let the cricket take up chafing  
as a woman takes up her needles  
and her yarn. Let evening come.

Let dew collect on the hoe abandoned  
in long grass. Let the stars appear  
and the moon disclose her silver horn.

Let the fox go back to its sandy den.  
Let the wind die down. Let the shed  
go black inside. Let evening come.

To the bottle in the ditch, to the scoop  
in the oats, to air in the lung  
let evening come.

Let it come, as it will, and don't  
be afraid. God does not leave us  
comfortless, so let evening come.

Source: *Let Evening Come: Poems by Jane Kenyon*, Graywolf Press, 1990.

Jane Kenyon was born in 1947, in Ann Arbor, Michigan. She attended the University of Michigan where the poet Donald Hall was her professor. They later married. She published four books of poetry during her lifetime, received a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1981 and was named poet laureate of New Hampshire in 1995. She died of leukemia on that same year at the age of 48.

## **Perhaps the World Ends Here** by Joy Harjo

The world begins at a kitchen table. No matter what, we must eat to live.

The gifts of earth are brought and prepared, set on the table. So it has been since creation, and it will go on.

We chase chickens or dogs away from it. Babies teethe at the corners. They scrape their knees under it.

It is here that children are given instructions on what it means to be human. We make men at it, we make women.

At this table we gossip, recall enemies and the ghosts of lovers.

Our dreams drink coffee with us as they put their arms around our children. They laugh with us at our poor falling-down selves and as we put ourselves back together once again at the table.

This table has been a house in the rain, an umbrella in the sun.

Wars have begun and ended at this table. It is a place to hide in the shadow of terror. A place to celebrate the terrible victory.

We have given birth on this table, and have prepared our parents for burial here.

At this table we sing with joy, with sorrow. We pray of suffering and remorse. We give thanks.

Perhaps the world will end at the kitchen table, while we are laughing and crying, eating of the last sweet bite.

Joy Harjo is the current U.S. Poet Laureate. Born in 1951, she is a member of the Muscogee Creek Nation and a significant figure in the second wave of the literary Native American Renaissance of the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century. She has written nine books of poetry, several plays, children's literature and a memoir. She is the recipient of many prestigious awards including the Ruth Lily Prize, PEN award, a Guggenheim and two NEA fellowships.

"Perhaps the World Ends Here" from *The Woman Who Fell From the Sky* by Joy Harjo.

Copyright © 1994 by Joy Harjo.

## *Vespers*

Louise Glück

In your extended absence, you permit me  
use of earth, anticipating  
some return on investment. I must report  
failure in my assignment, principally  
regarding the tomato plants.  
I think I should not be encouraged to grow  
tomatoes. Or, if I am, you should withhold  
the heavy rains, the cold nights that come  
so often here, while other regions get  
twelve weeks of summer. All this  
belongs to you: on the other hand,  
I planted the seeds, I watched the first shoots  
like wings tearing the soil, and it was my heart  
broken by the blight, the black spot so quickly  
multiplying in the rows. I doubt  
you have a heart, in our understanding of  
that term. You who do not discriminate  
between the dead and the living, who are, in consequence,  
immune to foreshadowing, you may not know  
how much terror we bear, the spotted leaf,  
the red leaves of the maple falling  
even in August, in early darkness: I am responsible  
for these vines.

Louise Glück was born in New York in 1943. She has served as U.S. Poet Laureate and was awarded the National Book Critics Circle Award, the Pulitzer Prize and many other prestigious awards. She is currently Writer in Residence at Yale and on faculty of Iowa Writer's Workshop.

## THOUGHTS ON WRITING

1. “A writer is someone who writes.” William Stafford 1914-1993 [65 volumes of poetry], National Book Award, Former U.S. Poet Laureate
2. “Genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood.” T.S. Eliot 1880-1965 – [Nobel Prize for Literature]
3. “The irony is that going to work every day became the subject of my best poetry.” AND: “I keep writing about the ordinary because for me it’s the home of extraordinary, the only home.” Philip Levine 1928-2015 [National Book Award, Poet Laureate, Pulitzer Prize]
4. Raymond Carver “It’s possible...to write about commonplace things and objects using commonplace but precise language, and to endow those things—a chair, a window curtain, a fork a stone, a woman’s earring—with immense, even startling power...” Raymond Carver 1938-1988, Poet and Short Story writer, nominated for Pulitzer and National Book Award
5. “No ideas but in things” (i.e., the necessity for strong imagery) William Carlos Williams 1883-1963 [National Book Award and Pulitzer Prize]
6. “Anybody who has survived his childhood has enough information about life to last him the rest of his days.” Flannery O’Connor 1925-1964 – National Book Award for Fiction
7. “Caress the divine details.” Vladimir Nabokov 1899-1977 – Russian/American/Swiss novelist and poet,
8. “Tell me...something I can’t forget” Tess Gallagher (b.1943) in her poem “Each Bird Walking,” Guggenheim Fellowship, National Endowment For Arts Award
9. “How do we know what readers won’t forget? Most likely, your reader won’t forget what you yourself can’t forget—what is burned most deeply into your own mind.” Pat Schneider, Poet, Teacher, 5 books of poetry and numerous books on the craft of writing
10. “Poetry has replaced novels. If you poured water on a great poem, you would get a novel.” Gloria Steinem (b.1934); journalist, author, a major spokesperson for feminist movement, Ms. Magazine co-founder, Presidential Medal of Freedom
11. “If you find yourself protecting anyone as you write...remember this: You’re not doing it right. Elizabeth Strout (b.1956) From *My Name is Lucy Barton* [Pulitzer Prize for Fiction: *Olive Kitteridge*]
12. “Each of us narrates our life as it suits us.” Elana Ferrante (b. 1943), Italian novelist, spoken by character Lila from *Those Who Leave and Those Who Stay*. [*The Neopolitan Novels*]
13. “I think one’s relationship with one’s vulnerability is a very delicate and precious relationship.” Philip Schultz (Pulitzer Prize for Poetry: *Failure*, 2008)
14. “When I began listening to poetry, it’s when I began to listen to the stones, and I began to listen to what the clouds had to say, and I began to listen to others. And I think, most importantly for all of us, then you begin to learn to listen to the soul, the soul of yourself in here, which is also the soul of everyone else.” Joy Harjo, U.S. Poet Laureate
- 15 “Writing poetry has probably been the best teacher for me learning to pray.” Jericho Brown (Pulitzer Prize Poetry 2020 for *The Tradition*)

(*My Two Cents*): 1. *Most memory is fiction.* Mindy Mangot

2. *Get it down or you risk losing the idea. Edit it later, but get it down now.* Mindy Mangot