

The Poet's Craft with Mindy Mangot  
August 24 at 3pm  
Poem Compilation (4 total)

*Untitled*

[James Baldwin](#) - 1924-1987

Lord,  
    when you send the rain,  
    think about it, please,  
    a little?  
Do  
    not get carried away  
    by the sound of falling water,  
    the marvelous light  
    on the falling water.  
I  
    am beneath that water.  
    It falls with great force  
    and the light  
Blinds  
    me to the light.

James Baldwin, primarily known for his novels, was also a playwright, essayist, activist and poet. Much of his work explores the intricacies of racial, sexual, and class distinctions in 20<sup>th</sup> Century American society. Born in Harlem in 1924, he became an ex-patriot, living in Paris where he died in 1987. He received many prestigious awards for his writing and wrote

*"Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."*

## **What lips my lips have kissed, and where, and why**

BY EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY

What lips my lips have kissed, and where, and why,  
I have forgotten, and what arms have lain  
Under my head till morning; but the rain  
Is full of ghosts tonight, that tap and sigh  
Upon the glass and listen for reply,  
And in my heart there stirs a quiet pain  
For unremembered lads that not again  
Will turn to me at midnight with a cry.

Thus in the winter stands the lonely tree,  
Nor knows what birds have vanished one by one,  
Yet knows its boughs more silent than before:  
I cannot say what loves have come and gone,  
I only know that summer sang in me  
A little while, that in me sings no more.

Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950) was an American poet and playwright who received the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1923. She was also known for her feminist activism. The poet and critic Richard Wilbur credited her with writing some of the best sonnets of the Twentieth Century.

**Let It Be Forgotten** by Sara Teasdale

Let it be forgotten, as a flower is forgotten,  
    Forgotten as a fire that once was singing gold,  
Let it be forgotten for ever and ever,  
    Time is a kind friend, he will make us old.

If anyone asks, say it was forgotten  
    Long and long ago,  
As a flower, as a fire, as a hushed footfall  
    In a long forgotten snow.

*Sara Trevor Teasdale was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1884. She is the author of Love Songs (The Macmillan Company, 1917), winner of the Columbia University Poetry Society Prize (which later became the Pulitzer Prize for poetry) and the Poetry Society of America Prize. She died in 1933.*

**LETTER TO MY GREAT, GREAT GRANDCHILD** by J.P. Grasser

Oh button, don't go thinking we loved pianos  
more than elephants, air conditioning more than air.

We loved honey, just loved it, and went into stores  
to smell the sweet perfume of unworn leather shoes.

Did you know, on the coast of Africa, the Sea Rose  
and Carpenter Bee used to depend on each other?

The petals only opened for the Middle C their wings  
beat, so in the end, we protested with tuning forks.

You must think we hated the stars, the empty ladles,  
because they conjured thirst. We didn't. We thanked

them and called them lucky, we even bought the rights  
to name them for our sweethearts. Believe it or not,

most people kept plants like pets and hired kids  
like you to water them, whenever they went away.

And ice! Can you imagine? We put it in our coffee  
and dumped it out at traffic lights, when it plugged up

our drinking straws. I had a dog once, a real dog,  
who ate venison and golden yams from a plastic dish.

He was stubborn, but I taught him to dance and play  
dead with a bucket full of chicken livers. And we danced

too, you know, at weddings and wakes, in basements  
and churches, even when the war was on. Our cars

we mostly named for animals, and sometimes we drove  
just to drive, to clear our heads of everything but wind.

**About the Treehouse Climate Action Poem Prize:**

J. P. Grasser's "Letter to My Great, Great Grandchild," is the first place winner of the inaugural Treehouse Climate Action Poem Prize. Established in 2019 with generous support from Treehouse Investments, the prize is given to honor exceptional poems that help make real for readers the gravity of the vulnerable state of our environment at present.

—*J. P. Grasser* (J.P. Grasser is a PhD candidate at the University of Utah and lives in Salt Lake City. Copyright 2020. Originally published in *American Poets, vol.8*.  
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