“Snow Day” by Billy Collins

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| Today we woke up to a revolution of snow,its white flag waving over everything,the landscape vanished,not a single mouse to punctuate the blankness,and beyond these windowsthe government buildings smothered,schools and libraries buried, the post office lostunder the noiseless drift,the paths of trains softly blocked,the world fallen under this falling.In a while I will put on some bootsand step out like someone walking in water,and the dog will porpoise through the drifts,and I will shake a laden branch,sending a cold shower down on us both.But for now I am a willing prisoner in this house,a sympathizer with the anarchic cause of snow.I will make a pot of teaand listen to the plastic radio on the counter,as glad as anyone to hear the newsthat the Kiddie Corner School is closed,the Ding-Dong School, closed,the All Aboard Children's School, closed,the Hi-Ho Nursery School, closed,along with -- some will be delighted to hear --the Toadstool School, the Little School,Little Sparrows Nursery School,Little Stars Pre-School, Peas-and-Carrots Day School,the Tom Thumb Child Center, all closed,and -- clap your hands -- the Peanuts Play School.So this is where the children hide all day,These are the nests where they letter and draw,where they put on their bright miniature jackets,all darting and climbing and sliding,all but the few girls whispering by the fence.And now I am listening hardin the grandiose silence of the snow,trying to hear what those three girls are plotting,what riot is afoot,which small queen is about to be brought down. |
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| “Still I Rise” by Maya AngelouYou may write me down in historyWith your bitter, twisted lies,You may trod me in the very dirtBut still, like dust, I'll rise.Does my sassiness upset you?Why are you beset with gloom?'Cause I walk like I've got oil wellsPumping in my living room.Just like moons and like suns,With the certainty of tides,Just like hopes springing high,Still I'll rise.Did you want to see me broken?Bowed head and lowered eyes?Shoulders falling down like teardrops,Weakened by my soulful cries?Does my haughtiness offend you?Don't you take it awful hard'Cause I laugh like I've got gold minesDiggin' in my own backyard.You may shoot me with your words,You may cut me with your eyes,You may kill me with your hatefulness,But still, like air, I'll rise.Does my sexiness upset you?Does it come as a surpriseThat I dance like I've got diamondsAt the meeting of my thighs?Out of the huts of history's shameI riseUp from a past that's rooted in painI riseI'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.Leaving behind nights of terror and fearI riseInto a daybreak that's wondrously clearI riseBringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,I am the dream and the hope of the slave.I riseI riseI rise. |  |

### “Baseball” by Greg Hall

Baseball is grass, chalk, and dirt displayed the same yet differently

In every park that has ever heard the words play ball.

Baseball is a passion that bonds and divides all those who know it.

Baseball is a pair of hands stained with newsprint,

A set of eyes squinting to read a boxscore,

A brow creased in an attempt to recreate a three-hour game

From an inch square block of type.

Baseball is the hat I wear to mow the lawn.

Baseball is a simple game of catch

and the never-ending search for the perfect knuckleball.

Baseball is Willie vs Mickey, Gibson vs Koufax, and Buddy Biancalana vs the odds.

Baseball links Kansan and Missourian, American and Japanese,

But most of all father and son.

Baseball is the scent of spring,

The unmistakable sound of a double down the line,

And the face of a 10-year-old emerging from a pile of bodies

With a worthless yet priceless foul ball.

Baseball is a language of very simple words that tell unbelievably magic tales.

Baseball is three brothers in the same uniform on the same team for one brief summer

Captured forever in a black and white photo on a table by the couch.

Baseball is a glove on a shelf, oiled and tightly wrapped,

Slumbering through the stark winter months.

Baseball is a breast pocket bulging with a transistor radio.

Baseball is the reason there are transistor radios.

Baseball is a voice in a box describing men you've never met,

In a place you've never been,

Doing things you'll never have the chance to do.

Baseball is a dream that you never really give up on.

Baseball is precious.

Baseball is timeless.

Baseball is forever.

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“To My Mother” by Wendell Berry

I was your rebellious son,
do you remember? Sometimes
I wonder if you do remember,
so complete has your forgiveness been.

So complete has your forgiveness been
I wonder sometimes if it did not
precede my wrong, and I erred,
safe found, within your love,

prepared ahead of me, the way home,
or my bed at night, so that almost
I should forgive you, who perhaps
foresaw the worst that I might do,

and forgave before I could act,
causing me to smile now, looking back,
to see how paltry was my worst,
compared to your forgiveness of it

already given. And this, then,
is the vision of that Heaven of which
we have heard, where those who love
each other have forgiven each other,

where, for that, the leaves are green,
the light a music in the air,
and all is unentangled,
and all is undismayed.

### “It's Raining In Love” by Richard Brautigan

### I don’t know what it is,but I distrust myselfwhen I start to like a girla lot.It makes me nervous.I don’t say the right thingsor perhaps I startto examine,evaluatecomputewhat I am saying.If I say, “Do you think it’s going to rain?”and she says, “I don’t know,”I start thinking: Does she really like me?In other wordsI get a little creepy.A friend of mine once said,“It’s twenty times better to be friendswith someonethan it is to be in love with them.”I think he’s right and besides,it’s raining somewhere, programming flowersand keeping snails happy.That’s all taken care of.BUT

if a girl likes me a lot
and starts getting real nervous
and suddenly begins asking me funny questions
and looks sad if I give the wrong answers
and she says things like,
“Do you think it’s going to rain?”
and I say, “It beats me,”
and she says, “Oh,”
and looks a little sad
at the clear blue California sky,
I think: Thank God, it’s you, baby, this time
instead of me.

**The Journey by Mary Oliver**

One day you finally knew
what you had to do, and began,
though the voices around you
kept shouting
their bad advice–
though the whole house
began to tremble
and you felt the old tug
at your ankles.
‘Mend my life!’
each voice cried.
But you didn’t stop.
You knew what you had to do,
though the wind pried
with its stiff fingers
at the very foundations,
though their melancholy
was terrible.
It was already late
enough, and a wild night,
and the road full of fallen
branches and stones.
But little by little,
as you left their voices behind,
the stars began to burn
through the sheets of clouds,
and there was a new voice
which you slowly
recognised as your own,
that kept you company
as you strode deeper and deeper
into the world,
determined to do
the only thing you could do–
determined to save
the only life you could save.

"In Celebration of Surviving," by Chuck Miller

when senselessness has pounded you around on the ropes
and you're getting too old to hold out for the future
no work and running out of money,
and then you make a try after something that you know you
won't get
and this long shot comes through on the stretch
in a photo finish of your heart's trepidation
then for a while
even when the chill factor of these prairie winters puts it at
fifty below
you're warm and have that old feeling
of being a comer, though belated
in the crazy game of life

standing in the winter night
emptying the garbage and looking at the stars
you realize that although the odds are fantastically against you
when that single January shooting star
flung its wad in the maw of night
it was yours
and though the years are edged with crime and squalor
that second wind, or twenty-third
is coming strong
and for a time
perhaps a very short time
one lives as though in a golden envelope of light