|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Poem #1**  **Introduction to Poetry**  *Billy Collins*  **I ask them to take a poem and hold it up to the light like a color slide**  **or press an ear against its hive.**  **I say drop a mouse into a poem and watch him probe his way out,**  **or walk inside the poem's room and feel the walls for a light switch.**  **I want them to waterski across the surface of a poem waving at the author's name on the shore.**  **But all they want to do is tie the poem to a chair with rope and torture a confession out of it.**  **They begin beating it with a hose to find out what it really means.**  **Poem 2**  **Where the Sidewalk Ends by Shel Silverstein**  There is a place where the sidewalk ends And before the street begins, And there the grass grows soft and white, And there the sun burns crimson bright, And there the moon-bird rests from his flight To cool in the peppermint wind.  Let us leave this place where the smoke blows black And the dark street winds and bends. Past the pits where the asphalt flowers grow We shall walk with a walk that is measured and slow, And watch where the chalk-white arrows go To the place where the sidewalk ends.  Yes we'll walk with a walk that is measured and slow, And we'll go where the chalk-white arrows go, For the children, they mark, and the children, they know The place where the sidewalk ends.  **Poems about Death**  The Vacuum Howard Nemerov  The house is so quiet now  The vacuum cleaner sulks in the corner closet,  Its bag limp as a stopped lung, its mouth  Grinning into the floor, maybe at my  Slovenly life, my dog-dead youth.    I’ve lived this way long enough,  But when my old woman died her soul  Went into that vacuum cleaner, and I can’t bear  To see the bag swell like a belly, eating the dust  And the woolen mice, and begin to howl    Because there is old filth everywhere  She used to crawl, in the corner and under the stair.  I know now how life is cheap as dirt,  And still the hungry, angry heart  Hangs on and howls, biting at air. The Vacuum[The Vacuum](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/171400#poem) The house is so quiet now  The vacuum cleaner sulks in the corner closet,  Its bag limp as a stopped lung, its mouth  Grinning into the floor, maybe at my  Slovenly life, my dog-dead youth.  I’ve lived this way long enough,  But when my old woman died her soul  Went into that vacuum cleaner, and I can’t bear  To see the bag swell like a belly, eating the dust  And the woolen mice, and begin to howl  Because there is old filth everywhere  She used to crawl, in the corner and under the stair.  I know now how life is cheap as dirt,  And still the hungry, angry heart  Hangs on and howls, biting at air. |

**Mid-Term Break by Seamus Heaney**

I sat all morning in the college sick bay  
Counting bells knelling classes to a close.  
At two o'clock our neighbors drove me home.  
  
In the porch I met my father crying--  
He had always taken funerals in his stride--  
And Big Jim Evans saying it was a hard blow.  
  
The baby cooed and laughed and rocked the pram  
When I came in, and I was embarrassed  
By old men standing up to shake my hand  
  
And tell me they were "sorry for my trouble,"  
Whispers informed strangers I was the eldest,  
Away at school, as my mother held my hand  
  
In hers and coughed out angry tearless sighs.  
At ten o'clock the ambulance arrived  
With the corpse, stanched and bandaged by the nurses.  
  
Next morning I went up into the room. Snowdrops  
And candles soothed the bedside; I saw him  
For the first time in six weeks. Paler now,  
  
Wearing a poppy bruise on his left temple,  
He lay in the four foot box as in his cot.  
No gaudy scars, the bumper knocked him clear.  
  
A four foot box, a foot for every year.

# Metaphors by Sylvia Plath

I'm a riddle in nine syllables,   
An elephant, a ponderous house,   
A melon strolling on two tendrils.   
O red fruit, ivory, fine timbers!   
This loaf's big with its yeasty rising.   
Money's new-minted in this fat purse.   
I'm a means, a stage, a cow in calf.   
I've eaten a bag of green apples,   
Boarded the train there's no getting off.

Because I could not stop for Death,  
He kindly stopped for me;  
The carriage held but just ourselves  
And Immortality.  
  
We slowly drove, he knew no haste,  
And I had put away  
My labour, and my leisure too,  
For his civility.  
  
We passed the school where children played,  
Their lessons scarcely done;  
We passed the fields of gazing grain,  
We passed the setting sun.  
  
We paused before a house that seemed  
A swelling of the ground;  
The roof was scarcely visible,  
The cornice but a mound.  
  
Since then 'tis centuries; but each  
Feels shorter than the day  
I first surmised the horses' heads  
Were toward eternity.

* Emily Dickinson

# Spring

# [Spring](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/173994#poem)

SPRING

***by: Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950)***

http://www.poetry-archive.com/t_pic.gifO what purpose, April, do you return again?

Beauty is not enough.

You can no longer quiet me with the redness

Of little leaves opening stickily.

I know what I know.

The sun is hot on my neck as I observe

The spikes of the crocus.

The smell of the earth is good.

It is apparent that there is no death.

But what does that signify?

Not only under ground are the brains of men

Eaten by maggots.

Life in itself

Is nothing,

An empty cup, a flight of uncarpeted stairs.

It is not enough that yearly, down this hill,

April

Comes like an idiot, babbling and strewing flowers.

**Sonnet 130 by William Shakespeare**

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;

Coral is far more red than her lips' red;

If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;

If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.

I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,

But no such roses see I in her cheeks;

And in some perfumes is there more delight

Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.

I love to hear her speak, yet well I know

That music hath a far more pleasing sound;

I grant I never saw a goddess go;

My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground:

And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare

As any she belied with false compare.