

Percy Bysshe Shelley

*from* **Ode to the West Wind**

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:  
What if my leaves are falling like its own!  
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies  
Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,  
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,  
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe  
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!  
And, by the incantation of this verse,  
Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth  
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!  
Be through my lips to unawakened Earth  
The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,  
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

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# The Songs

Martin Bell Reprinted by permission of Bloodaxe Books from *Complete Poems* (1988)

Continuous, a medley of old pop numbers –  
Our lives are like this. Three whistled bars  
Are all it takes to catch us, defenceless  
On a District Line platform, sullen to our jobs,  
And the thing stays with us all day, still dapper, still Astaire,  
Still fancy-free. We're dreaming while we work.

Be careful, keep afloat, the past is lapping your chin.  
*South of the Border* is sad boys in khaki  
In 1939. And *J'attendrai* a transit camp,  
Tents in the dirty sand. Don't go back to Sorrento.  
Be brisk and face the day and set your feet  
On the sunny side always, the sunny side of the street.

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# Private Ownership

Sasha Dugdale

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I belong to you  
And, I am not afraid to say it,  
You belong to me.

I am a private owner, it could be said.  
I will not share you with the nation –  
Nor collectivise you.

We will indulge in dangerous dissolution  
And luxury and harmful intelligence  
And sleep in our own skins  
And go scented and unrepentant  
To the airport at the end.

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# Praise Song for My Mother

Grace Nichols

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from *I Have Crossed an Ocean:*  
*Selected Poems* (Bloodaxe 2010)

You were  
water to me  
deep and bold and fathoming

You were  
moon's eye to me  
pull and grained and mantling

You were  
sunrise to me  
rise and warm and streaming

You were  
the fishes red gill to me  
the flame tree's spread to me  
the crab's leg/the fried plantain smell  
replenishing replenishing

Go to your wide futures, you said

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# Upwards (for Ty Chijioke)

*after Christopher Gilbert*

Raymond Antrobus

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from *All The Names Given* (2021)

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The last place the sun reaches in my garden  
is the back wall where the ivy  
grows above the stinging nettles.

What are they singing to us?

Is it painless to listen?

Will music soothe our anxious house?

*Speech falls on things like rain*

sun shades all the feelings of having a heart.

Here, take my pulse, take my breath,

take my arms as I drift off

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The time will come  
when, with elation,  
you will greet yourself arriving  
at your own door, in your own mirror,  
and each will smile at the other's welcome,  
and say, sit here. Eat.  
You will love again the stranger who was your self.  
Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart  
to itself, to the stranger who has loved you

# Love after Love

Derek Walcott

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all your life, whom you ignored  
for another, who knows you by heart.  
Take down the love letters from the bookshelf,  
the photographs, the desperate notes,  
peel your own image from the mirror.  
Sit. Feast on your life.

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