

September Poem

“The Road Not Taken”

by Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

October Poem

“O Captain! My Captain”

by Walt Whitman

O Captain! My Captain! Our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weathered every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! My Captain! Rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up – for you the flag is flung – for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribboned wreaths – for you the shores a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Here Captain! Dear Father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck
You’ve fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse or will,
The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
Exult O shores! and ring O bells!
But I with mournful tread
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

November Poem

“Gettysburg Address”

Speech by Abraham Lincoln at the dedication of
the National Cemetery at Gettysburg, PA,
November 19, 1863

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate -- we can not consecrate -- we can not hallow -- this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us -- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion -- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain -- that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom -- and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

December Poem

“Once in Royal David’s City”

by Cecil Frances Alexander

Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby in a manger for His bed:
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven, who is God and Lord of all,
And His shelter was a stable, and His cradle was a stall;
With the poor, the scorned, the lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.

And, through all His wondrous childhood, He would honor and obey,
Love and watch the lowly maiden in whose gentle arms He lay:
Christian children all must be mild, obedient, good as He.

For He is our childhood's pattern, day by day like us He grew;
He was little, weak and helpless, tears and smiles like us He knew.
And He feeleth for our sadness, and He shareth in our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see Him, through His own redeeming love;
For that Child so dear and gentle is our Lord in heaven above;
And He leads his children on to that place where He is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable, with the oxen standing by,
We shall see Him; but in heaven, set at God's right hand on high;
When like stars His children crowned, all in white shall wait around.

“Psalm 26”

1. Vindicate me, O LORD,
For I have walked in my integrity,
I have also trusted in the LORD;
I shall not slip.
2. Examine me, O LORD, and prove me;
Try my mind and my heart.
3. For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes,
And I have walked in Your truth.
4. I have not sat with idolatrous mortals,
Nor will I go in with hypocrites.
5. I have hated the assembly of evildoers,
And will not sit with the wicked.
6. I will wash my hands in innocence;
So I will go about Your altar, O LORD,
7. That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving,
And tell of all Your wondrous works.
8. LORD, I have loved the habitation of Your house,
And the place where Your glory dwells.
9. Do not gather my soul with sinners,
Nor my life with bloodthirsty men,
10. In whose hands is a sinister scheme,
And whose right hand is full of bribes.
11. But as for me, I will walk in my integrity;
Redeem me and be merciful to me.
12. My foot stands in an even place;
In the congregations I will bless the LORD.

“The Charge of the Light Brigade”

By Alfred Lord Tennyson

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
“Forward, the Light Brigade!
“Charge for the guns!” he said:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
“Forward, the Light Brigade!”
Was there a man dismayed?
Not though the soldier knew
Someone had blundered:
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volleyed and thundered;
Stormed at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred.

Flashed all their sabres bare,
Flashed as they turned in air,
Sab’ring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wondered:
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro’ the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reeled from the sabre stroke
Shattered and sundered.
Then they rode back, but not
Not the six hundred.
Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volleyed and thundered;
Stormed at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came through the jaws of Death
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.
When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!
All the world wondered.
Honor the charge they made,
Honor the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred.

May Poem

"I Like to See It Lap the Miles"

by Emily Dickinson

I like to see it lap the miles,
And lick the valleys up,
And stop to feed itself at tanks;
And then, prodigious, step

Around a pile of mountains,
And, supercilious, peer
In shanties by the sides of roads;
And then a quarry pare

To fit its sides, and crawl between,
Complaining all the while
In horrid, hooting stanza;
Then chase itself down hill

And neigh like Boanerges,
Then, punctual as a star,
Stop – docile and omnipotent –
At its own stable door.