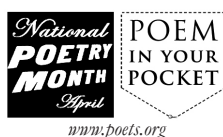


My hands!
My dark hands!
Break through the wall!
Find my dream!
Help me to shatter this darkness,
To smash this night,
To break this shadow
Into a thousand lights of sun,
Into a thousand whirling dreams
Of sun!

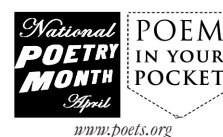
—Langston Hughes, “As I Grew Older”



TOKEN LOSS

To the dragon
any loss is
total. His rest
is disrupted
if a single
jewel encrusted
goblet has
been stolen.
The circle
of himself
in the nest
of his gold
has been
broken. No
loss is token.

— Kay Ryan



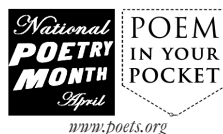
Hymn to Lota

Close, close all night
the lovers keep.
They turn together,
in their sleep,

close as two pages
in a book
that read each other
in the dark.

Each knows all
the other knows,
learned by heart
from head to toes.

—Elizabeth Bishop (1911-1979)



I'm Nobody! Who are you?
Are you – Nobody – too?
Then there's a pair of us?
Don't tell! they'd advertise – you know!

How dreary – to be – Somebody!
How public – like a Frog –
To tell one's name – the livelong June –
To an admiring Bog!

— Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)



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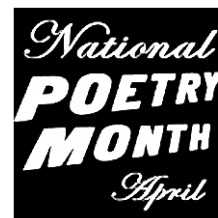
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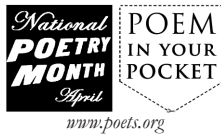
DEMETER'S PRAYER TO HADES

DUST OF SNOW

The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
From a hemlock tree

Has given my heart
A change of mood
And saved some part
Of a day I had rued.

—Robert Frost, 1923



This alone is what I wish for you: knowledge.
To understand each desire and its edge,
to know we are responsible for the lives
we change. No faith comes without cost,
no one believes without dying.
Now for the first time
I see clearly the trail you planted,
what ground opened to waste,
though you dreamed a wealth
of flowers.

There are no curses, only mirrors
held up to the souls of gods and mortals.
And so I give up this fate, too.
Believe in yourself,
go ahead—see where it gets you.

—Rita Dove

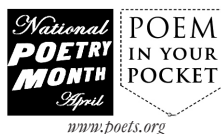


THE LOOK

Strephon kissed me in the spring,
Robin in the fall,
But Colin only looked at me
And never kissed at all.

Strephon's kiss was lost in jest,
Robin's lost in play,
But the kiss in Colin's eyes
Haunts me night and day.

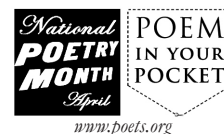
—Sara Teasdale, 1915



THE CROSSROADS

This is the place it happened. It was here.
You might not know it was unless you knew.
All day the cars blow past and disappear.
This is the place it happened. It was here.
Look at the sparkling dust, the oily smear.
Look at the highway marker, still askew.
This is the place it happened. It was here.
You might not know it was unless you knew.

—Joshua Mehigan, 2011



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