

There Will Come Soft Rains

Sara Teasdale

There will come soft rains and the smell of the ground,
And swallows circling with their shimmering sound; **A**

And frogs in the pools singing at night,
And wild plum-trees in tremulous white;

5 Robins will wear their feathery fire
Whistling their whims on a low fence-wire; **B**

And not one will know of the war, not one
Will care at last when it is done.

Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree
10 If mankind perished utterly;

And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn,
Would scarcely know that we were gone.

A READING POETRY

Read the first stanza aloud. Notice that it is a rhymed couplet. What expectations are set up by this end rhyme?

B SOUND DEVICES

What examples of alliteration can you identify in lines 1–6?

ANALYZE VISUALS

What overall feeling do you get from this landscape?

Spring Landscape (1909),
Constant Permeke. Constant
Permeke Museum, Jabbeke, Belgium.
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Moonrise (1906), Guillermo Gómez y Gil. Oil on canvas. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Pau, France. Photo © Giraudon/Bridgeman Art Library.

Meeting at Night

Robert Browning

1

The gray sea and the long black land;
And the yellow half-moon large and low;
And the startled little waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
5 As I gain the cove¹ with pushing prow,²
And quench its speed i' the slushy sand. **C**

2

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
10 And blue spurt of a lighted match,
And a voice less loud, through its joys and fears,
Than the two hearts beating each to each! **D**

C READING POETRY

Read the first stanza aloud. What **rhyme scheme** do you notice?

D MAKE INFERENCES

Where does the speaker arrive, and what happens once he is there?

1. **cove**: a small, partly enclosed body of water.

2. **prow** (prou): the front part of a boat.

The Sound of Night

Maxine Kumin

And now the dark comes on, all full of chitter noise.
Birds huggermugger¹ crowd the trees,
the air thick with their vesper² cries,
and bats, snub seven-pointed kites,
5 skitter across the lake, swing out,
squeak, chirp, dip, and skim on skates
of air, and the fat frogs wake and prink
wide-lipped, noisy as ducks, drunk
on the boozy black, gloating chink-chunk. **E**

10 And now on the narrow beach we defend ourselves from dark.
The cooking done, we build our firework
bright and hot and less for outlook
than for magic, and lie in our blankets
while night nickers around us. Crickets
15 chorus hallelujahs; paws, quiet
and quick as raindrops, play on the stones
expertly soft, run past and are gone;
fish pulse in the lake; the frogs hoarsen.

Now every voice of the hour—the known, the supposed, the strange,
20 the mindless, the witted, the never seen—
sing, thrum, impinge,³ and rearrange
endlessly; and debarred⁴ from sleep we wait
for the birds, importantly silent,
for the crease of first eye-licking light,
25 for the sun, lost long ago and sweet.
By the lake, locked black away and tight,
we lie, day creatures, overhearing night.

1. **huggermugger**: disorderly.

2. **vesper**: pertaining to the evening; a type of swallow that sings in the evening.

3. **impinge** (im-pij): to strike or push upon.

4. **debarred**: prevented or hindered.



Trees at Night (c. 1900), Thomas Meteyard. Berry Hill Gallery, New York. Photo © Edward Owen/Art Resource, New York.

E SOUND DEVICES
What examples of **onomatopoeia** can you identify in the first stanza? What do they add to the poem?



The Spinet (1902), Thomas Wilmer Dewing. Oil on wood, 15 1/2" x 20". Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C. Photo © Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C./Art Resource, New York.

Piano

D. H. Lawrence

Softly, in the dusk, a woman is singing to me;
Taking me back down the vista of years, till I see
A child sitting under the piano, in the boom of the
tingling strings
And pressing the small, poised feet of a mother who
smiles as she sings.

5 In spite of myself, the insidious mastery of song
Betrays me back, till the heart of me weeps to belong
To the old Sunday evenings at home, with winter outside
And hymns in the cozy parlour, the tinkling piano
our guide. 6

So now it is vain for the singer to burst into clamour
10 With the great black piano appassionato. The glamour
Of childish days is upon me, my manhood is cast
Down in the flood of remembrance, I weep like a child
for the past.

6 SOUND DEVICES

Reread lines 5–9
aloud. Where can you
find **assonance** and
consonance in this
stanza?

Fifteen

William Stafford

South of the bridge on Seventeenth
I found back of the willows one summer
day a motorcycle with engine running
as it lay on its side, ticking over
5 slowly in the high grass. I was fifteen.

I admired all that pulsing gleam, the
shiny flanks, the demure headlights
fringed where it lay; I led it gently
to the road and stood with that
10 companion, ready and friendly. I was fifteen. **B**

We could find the end of a road, meet
the sky on out Seventeenth. I thought about
hills, and patting the handle got back a
confident opinion. On the bridge we indulged
15 a forward feeling, a tremble. I was fifteen.

Thinking, back farther in the grass I found
the owner, just coming to, where he had flipped
over the rail. He had blood on his hand, was pale—
I helped him walk to his machine. He ran his hand
20 over it, called me good man, roared away.

I stood there, fifteen.

B LINE BREAKS

Notice how Stafford continues a thought or sentence from one line to the next. How does this **enjambment** affect the way you read the lines?



Tonight I Can Write

Pablo Neruda

Tonight I can write the saddest lines.

Write, for example, "The night is starry
and the blue stars shiver in the distance."

The night wind revolves in the sky and sings.

Tonight I can write the saddest lines.
I loved her, and sometimes she loved me too.

Through nights like this one I held her in my arms.
I kissed her again and again under the endless sky.

She loved me sometimes, and I loved her too.
How could one not have loved her great still eyes.

Tonight I can write the saddest lines.
To think that I do not have her. To feel that I have
lost her.

To hear the immense night, still more immense
without her.
And the verse falls to the soul like dew to the pasture.

What does it matter that my love could not keep her.
The night is starry and she is not with me.

This is all. In the distance someone is singing. In the
distance.
My soul is not satisfied that it has lost her.

My sight tries to find her as though to bring her
closer.
My heart looks for her, and she is not with me.

The same night whitening the same trees.
We, of that time, are no longer the same.

I no longer love her, that's certain, but how I loved
her.
My voice tried to find the wind to touch her hearing.

Another's. She will be another's. As she was before
my kisses.

Her voice, her bright body. Her infinite eyes.

I no longer love her, that's certain, but maybe I love
her.

Love is so short, forgetting is so long.

Because through nights like this one I held her in my
arms
my soul is not satisfied that it has lost her.

Though this be the last pain that she makes me suffer
and these the last verses that I write for her.