

The Circus Animals' Desertion  
William Butler Yeats

I.

I sought a theme and sought for it in vain,  
I sought it daily for six weeks or so.  
Maybe at last, being but a broken man,  
I must be satisfied with my heart, although  
Winter and summer till old age began  
My circus animals were all on show,  
Those stilted boys, that burnished chariot,  
Lion and woman and the Lord knows what.

II.

What can I but enumerate old themes,  
First that sea-rider Oisín led by the nose  
Through three enchanted islands, allegorical dreams,  
Vain gaiety, vain battle, vain repose,  
Themes of the embittered heart, or so it seems,  
That might adorn old songs or courtly shows;  
But what cared I that set him on to ride,  
I, starved for the bosom of his faery bride.  
And then a counter-truth filled out its play,  
'The Countess Cathleen' was the name I gave it;  
She, pity-crazed, had given her soul away,  
But masterful Heaven had intervened to save it.  
I thought my dear must her own soul destroy  
So did fanaticism and hate enslave it,  
And this brought forth a dream and soon enough  
This dream itself had all my thought and love.  
And when the Fool and Blind Man stole the bread  
Cúchulain fought the ungovernable sea;  
Heart-mysteries there, and yet when all is said  
It was the dream itself enchanted me:  
Character isolated by a deed  
To engross the present and dominate memory.  
Players and painted stage took all my love,  
And not those things that they were emblems of.

III.

Those masterful images because complete  
Grew in pure mind, but out of what began?  
A mound of refuse or the sweepings of a street,  
Old kettles, old bottles, and a broken can,  
Old iron, old bones, old rags, that raving slut  
Who keeps the till. Now that my ladder's gone,

I must lie down where all the ladders start  
In the foul rag and bone shop of the heart.

Poetry  
Marianne Moore

I, too, dislike it: there are things that are important beyond  
all this fiddle.

Reading it, however, with a perfect contempt for it, one  
discovers in

it after all, a place for the genuine.

Hands that can grasp, eyes

that can dilate, hair that can rise

if it must, these things are important not because a

high-sounding interpretation can be put upon them but because  
they are

useful. When they become so derivative as to become  
unintelligible,

the same thing may be said for all of us, that we

do not admire what

we cannot understand: the bat

holding on upside down or in quest of something to

eat, elephants pushing, a wild horse taking a roll, a tireless  
wolf under

a tree, the immovable critic twitching his skin like a horse

that feels a flea, the base-

ball fan, the statistician—

nor is it valid

to discriminate against "business documents and

school-books"; all these phenomena are important. One must make  
a distinction

however: when dragged into prominence by half poets, the  
result is not poetry,

nor till the poets among us can be

"literalists of

the imagination"—above

insolence and triviality and can present

for inspection, "imaginary gardens with real toads in them,"  
shall we have

it. In the meantime, if you demand on the one hand,  
the raw material of poetry in

all its rawness and  
that which is on the other hand  
genuine, you are interested in poetry.

Disillusionment of Ten O'Clock  
Wallace Stevens

The houses are haunted  
By white night-gowns.  
None are green,  
Or purple with green rings,  
Or green with yellow rings,  
Or yellow with blue rings.  
None of them are strange,  
With socks of lace  
And beaded ceintures.  
People are not going  
To dream of baboons and periwinkles.  
Only, here and there, an old sailor,  
Drunk and asleep in his boots,  
Catches tigers  
In red weather.

Spring and All  
William Carlos Williams

By the road to the contagious hospital  
under the surge of the blue  
mottled clouds driven from the  
northeast—a cold wind. Beyond, the  
waste of broad, muddy fields  
brown with dried weeds, standing and fallen

patches of standing water  
the scattering of tall trees

All along the road the reddish  
purplish, forked, upstanding, twiggy  
stuff of bushes and small trees  
with dead, brown leaves under them  
leafless vines—

Lifeless in appearance, sluggish  
dazed spring approaches—

They enter the new world naked,  
cold, uncertain of all  
save that they enter. All about them  
the cold, familiar wind—

Now the grass, tomorrow  
the stiff curl of wildcarrot leaf  
One by one objects are defined—  
It quickens: clarity, outline of leaf

But now the stark dignity of  
entrance— Still, the profound change  
has come upon them: rooted, they  
grip down and begin to awaken

somewhere i have never travelled,gladly beyond  
e. e. cummings

somewhere i have never travelled,gladly beyond  
any experience,your eyes have their silence:  
in your most frail gesture are things which enclose me,  
or which i cannot touch because they are too near

your slightest look easily will uncloset me  
though i have closed myself as fingers,  
you open always petal by petal myself as Spring opens  
(touching skilfully,mysteriously)her first rose

or if your wish be to close me, i and  
my life will shut very beautifully ,suddenly,  
as when the heart of this flower imagines  
the snow carefully everywhere descending;

nothing which we are to perceive in this world equals  
the power of your intense fragility:whose texture  
compels me with the color of its countries,  
rendering death and forever with each breathing

(i do not know what it is about you that closes  
and opens;only something in me understands  
the voice of your eyes is deeper than all roses)  
nobody,not even the rain,has such small hands