***Chapter One***

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**The Eagle**

**BY ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON (1809 – 1892)**

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;

Close to the sun in lonely lands,

Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;

He watches from his mountain walls,

And like a thunderbolt he falls.

**Winter**

**William Shakespeare (1556 – 1616)**

When icicles hang by the wall

And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,

And Tom bears logs into the hall,

And milk comes frozen home in pail;

When blood is nipt, and ways be foul, 5

Then nightly sings the staring owl

Tu-whoo!

Tu-whit! tu-whoo! A merry note!

While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When all around the wind doth blow, 10

And coughing drowns the parson's saw,

And birds sit brooding in the snow,

And Marian's nose looks red and raw;

When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl—

Then nightly sings the staring owl 15

Tu-whoo!

Tu-whit! tu-whoo! A merry note!

While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

**Dulce Et Decorum Est**

**Wilfred Owen (1893 – 1918)**

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,

Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,

Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs

And towards our distant rest began to trudge.

Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots

But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;

Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots

Of disappointed shells that dropped behind.

GAS! Gas! Quick, boys!-- An ecstasy of fumbling,

Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;

But someone still was yelling out and stumbling

And floundering like a man in fire or lime.--

Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light

As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,

He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace

Behind the wagon that we flung him in,

And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,

His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;

If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood

Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,

Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud

Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,--

My friend, you would not tell with such high zest

To children ardent for some desperate glory,

The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est

Pro patria mori.

**Spring**

**William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616)**

When daisies pied and violets blue

And lady-smocks all silver-white

And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue

Do paint the meadows with delight,

The cuckoo then, on every tree,

Mocks married men; for thus sings he:

“Cuckoo;

Cuckoo, cuckoo!” O, word of fear,

Unpleasing to a married ear!

When shepherds pipe on oaten straws,

And merry larks are ploughmen's clocks,

When turtles tread, and rooks, and daws,

And maidens bleach their summer smocks,

The cuckoo then, on every tree,

Mocks married men; for thus sings he,

“Cuckoo;

Cuckoo, cuckoo!” O, word of fear,

Unpleasing to a married ear!

**How many times these low feet staggered**

**BY Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)**

How many times these low feet staggered -

Only the soldered mouth can tell -

Try - can you stir the awful rivet -

Try - can you lift the hasps of steel!

Stroke the cool forehead - hot so often -

Lift - if you care - the listless hair -

Handle the adamantine fingers

Never a thimble - more - shall wear -

Buzz the dull flies - on the chamber window -

Brave - shines the sun through the freckled pane -

Fearless - the cobweb swings from the ceiling -

Indolent Housewife - in Daisies - lain!

**The Whipping**

**By Robert Hayden (1913 – 1980)**

The old woman across the way

is whipping the boy again

and shouting to the neighborhood

her goodness and his wrongs.

Wildly he crashes through elephant ears,

pleads in dusty zinnias,

while she in spite of crippling fat

pursues and corners him.

She strikes and strikes the shrilly circling

boy till the stick breaks

in her hand. His tears are rainy weather

to woundlike memories:

My head gripped in bony vise

of knees, the writhing struggle

to wrench free, the blows, the fear

worse than blows that hateful

Words could bring, the face that I

no longer knew or loved . . .

Well, it is over now, it is over,

and the boy sobs in his room,

And the woman leans muttering against

a tree, exhausted, purged—

avenged in part for lifelong hidings

she has had to bear.

**Ballad of Birmingham**

**BY DUDLEY RANDALL (b.1914)**

(On the bombing of a church in Birmingham, Alabama, 1963)

“Mother dear, may I go downtown

Instead of out to play,

And march the streets of Birmingham

In a Freedom March today?”

“No, baby, no, you may not go,

For the dogs are fierce and wild,

And clubs and hoses, guns and jails

Aren’t good for a little child.”

“But, mother, I won’t be alone.

Other children will go with me,

And march the streets of Birmingham

To make our country free.”

“No, baby, no, you may not go,

For I fear those guns will fire.

But you may go to church instead

And sing in the children’s choir.”

She has combed and brushed her night-dark hair,

And bathed rose petal sweet,

And drawn white gloves on her small brown hands,

And white shoes on her feet.

The mother smiled to know her child

Was in the sacred place,

But that smile was the last smile

To come upon her face.

For when she heard the explosion,

Her eyes grew wet and wild.

She raced through the streets of Birmingham

Calling for her child.

She clawed through bits of glass and brick,

Then lifted out a shoe.

“O, here’s the shoe my baby wore,

But, baby, where are you?”

**Kitchenette Building**

**BY GWENDOLYN BROOKS (b.1917)**

We are things of dry hours and the involuntary plan,

Grayed in, and gray. “Dream” makes a giddy sound, not strong

Like “rent,” “feeding a wife,” “satisfying a man.”

But could a dream send up through onion fumes

Its white and violet, fight with fried potatoes

And yesterday’s garbage ripening in the hall,

Flutter, or sing an aria down these rooms

Even if we were willing to let it in,

Had time to warm it, keep it very clean,

Anticipate a message, let it begin?

We wonder. But not well! not for a minute!

Since Number Five is out of the bathroom now,

We think of lukewarm water, hope to get in it.

**The Red Wheelbarrow**

**By William Carlos Williams (1883 – 1963)**

so much depends

upon

a red wheel

barrow

glazed with rain

water

beside the white

chickens

**In a Station of the Metro**

**Ezra Pound (1884–1972)**

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;

Petals on a wet, black bough.

**Suicides’s Note**

**Langston Hughes (1902-1967)**

The calm,

Cool face of the river

Asked me for a kiss.

**Terence, this is stupid stuff**

**A.E. Housman (1859–1936). (1859-1936)**

“Terence, this is stupid stuff:

You eat your victuals fast enough;

There can’t be much amiss, ’tis clear,

To see the rate you drink your beer.

But oh, good Lord, the verse you make, 5

It gives a chap the belly-ache.

The cow, the old cow, she is dead;

It sleeps well, the horned head:

We poor lads, ’tis our turn now

To hear such tunes as killed the cow. 10

Pretty friendship ’tis to rhyme

Your friends to death before their time

Moping melancholy mad:

Come, pipe a tune to dance to, lad.”

Why, if ’tis dancing you would be, 15

There’s brisker pipes than poetry.

Say, for what were hop-yards meant,

Or why was Burton built on Trent?

Oh many a peer of England brews

Livelier liquor than the Muse, 20

And malt does more than Milton can

To justify God’s ways to man.

Ale, man, ale’s the stuff to drink

For fellows whom it hurts to think:

Look into the pewter pot 25

To see the world as the world’s not.

And faith, ’tis pleasant till ’tis past:

The mischief is that ’twill not last.

Oh I have been to Ludlow fair

And left my necktie God knows where, 30

And carried half way home, or near,

Pints and quarts of Ludlow beer:

Then the world seemed none so bad,

And I myself a sterling lad;

And down in lovely muck I’ve lain, 35

Happy till I woke again.

Then I saw the morning sky:

Heigho, the tale was all a lie;

The world, it was the old world yet,

I was I, my things were wet, 40

And nothing now remained to do

But begin the game anew.

Therefore, since the world has still

Much good, but much less good than ill,

And while the sun and moon endure 45

Luck’s a chance, but trouble’s sure,

I’d face it as a wise man would,

And train for ill and not for good.

’Tis true, the stuff I bring for sale

Is not so brisk a brew as ale: 50

Out of a stem that scored the hand

I wrung it in a weary land.

But take it: if the smack is sour,

The better for the embittered hour;

It should do good to heart and head 55

When your soul is in my soul’s stead;

And I will friend you, if I may,

In the dark and cloudy day.

There was a king reigned in the East:

There, when kings will sit to feast, 60

They get their fill before they think

With poisoned meat and poisoned drink.

He gathered all the springs to birth

From the many-venomed earth;

First a little, thence to more, 65

He sampled all her killing store;

And easy, smiling, seasoned sound,

Sate the king when healths went round.

They put arsenic in his meat

And stared aghast to watch him eat; 70

They poured strychnine in his cup

And shook to see him drink it up:

They shook, they stared as white’s their shirt:

Them it was their poison hurt.

—I tell the tale that I heard told. 75

Mithridates, he died old.

**Ars Poetica**

**Archibald MacLeish (1892 – 1982)**

A poem should be palpable and mute

As a globed fruit

Dumb

As old medallions to the thumb

Silent as the sleeve-worn stone

Of casement ledges where the moss has grown -

A poem should be wordless

As the flight of birds

A poem should be motionless in time

As the moon climbs.

Leaving, as the moon releases

Twig by twig the night-entangled trees,

Leaving, as the moon behind the winter leaves,

Memory by memory the mind -

A poem should be motionless in time

As the moon climbs.

A poem should be equal to:

Not true.

For all the history of grief

An empty doorway and a maple leaf.

For love

The leaning grasses and two lights above the sea -

A poem should not mean

But be.