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| |  | | --- | | **We Real Cool** | |  |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | THE POOL PLAYERS.  SEVEN AT THE GOLDEN SHOVEL.    We real cool. We Left school. We  Lurk late. We Strike straight. We  Sing sin. We Thin gin. We  Jazz June. We Die soon.   Gwendolyn Brooks | |

**I'm nobody! Who are you?**

**Emily Dickinson**

I'm nobody! Who are you?  
Are you nobody, too?  
Then there's a pair of us -- don't tell!  
They'd banish us, you know.

How dreary to be somebody!  
How public, like a frog  
To tell your name the livelong day  
To an admiring bog!

**Ay ay ay de la grifa negra**

*Julia de Burgos*

Ay ay ay, que soy grifa y pura negra;  
grifería en mi pelo, cafrería en mis labios;  
y mi chata nariz mozambiquea.

Negra de intacto tinte, lloro y río  
la vibración de ser estatua negra;  
de ser trozo de noche,  
en que mis blancos dientes relampaguean;  
y ser negro bejuco  
que a lo negro se enreda  
y comba el negro nido  
en que el cuervo se acuesta.  
Negro trozo de negro en que me esculpo,  
ay ay ay, que mi estatua es toda negra.

Dícenme que mi abuelo fue el esclavo  
por quien el amo dio treinta monedas.  
Ay ay ay, que el esclavo fue mi abuelo  
es mi pena, es mi pena.  
Si hubiera sido el amo,  
sería mi vergüenza;  
que en los hombres, igual que en las naciones,  
si el ser el siervo es no tener derechos,  
el ser el amo es no tener conciencia.

Ay ay ay, los pecados del rey blanco  
lávelos en perdón la reina negra.  
Ay ay ay, que la raza se me fuga  
y hacia la raza blanca zumba y vuela  
hundirse en su agua clara;  
tal vez si la blanca se ensombrará en la negra.

Ay ay ay, que mi negra raza huye  
y con la blanca corre a ser trigueña;  
¡a ser la del futuro,  
fraternidad de América!

**Nick and the Candlestick**

I am a miner. The light burns blue.   
Waxy stalactites   
Drip and thicken, tears   
  
The earthen womb   
  
Exudes from its dead boredom.   
Black bat airs   
  
Wrap me, raggy shawls,   
Cold homicides.   
They weld to me like plums.   
  
Old cave of calcium   
Icicles, old echoer.   
Even the newts are white,   
  
Those holy Joes.   
And the fish, the fish—   
Christ! They are panes of ice,   
  
A vice of knives,   
A piranha   
Religion, drinking   
  
Its first communion out of my live toes.   
The candle   
Gulps and recovers its small altitude,   
  
Its yellows hearten.   
O love, how did you get here?   
O embryo   
  
Remembering, even in sleep,   
Your crossed position.   
The blood blooms clean   
  
In you, ruby.   
The pain   
You wake to is not yours.   
  
Love, love,   
I have hung our cave with roses.   
With soft rugs—   
  
The last of Victoriana.   
Let the stars   
Plummet to their dark address,   
  
Let the mercuric   
Atoms that cripple drip   
Into the terrible well,   
  
You are the one   
Solid the spaces lean on, envious.   
You are the baby in the barn.

**Sylvia Plath**

**Untitled Tanka** [**"The lower leaves of the trees"**](http://humanitieslab.stanford.edu/PhilosophicalStages/451)

by Sone No Yoshitada, translated by Kenneth Rexroth

The lower leaves of the trees

Tangle the sunset in dusk.

Awe spreads with

The summer twilight.

**Minstrel Man**

Because my mouth

Is wide with laughter

And my throat

Is deep with song,

You do not think

I suffer after

I have held my pain

So long?

Because my mouth

Is wide with laughter,

You do not hear

My inner cry?

Because my feet

Are gay with dancing,

You do not know

I die?

— “Minstrel Man” Langston Hughes



**Quiet Night Thoughts by Li Bai**

The moonlight glistens in front of my bed.

I thought it was the frost on the ground.

I lift my gaze to view the shimmering moon,

Then lower my head, and miss my homeland.

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| **Facing It** |  |
| by [Yusef Komunyakaa](http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/22) | |
|  | |
| My black face fades,  hiding inside the black granite.  I said I wouldn't,  dammit: No tears.  I'm stone. I'm flesh.  My clouded reflection eyes me  like a bird of prey, the profile of night  slanted against morning. I turn  this way--the stone lets me go.  I turn that way--I'm inside  the Vietnam Veterans Memorial  again, depending on the light  to make a difference.  I go down the 58,022 names,  half-expecting to find  my own in letters like smoke.  I touch the name Andrew Johnson;  I see the booby trap's white flash.  Names shimmer on a woman's blouse  but when she walks away  the names stay on the wall.  Brushstrokes flash, a red bird's  wings cutting across my stare.  The sky. A plane in the sky.  A white vet's image floats  closer to me, then his pale eyes  look through mine. I'm a window.  He's lost his right arm  inside the stone. In the black mirror  a woman's trying to erase names:  No, she's brushing a boy's hair. |  |