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| **We Real Cool**  |

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|   | THE POOL PLAYERS. SEVEN AT THE GOLDEN SHOVEL.We real cool. WeLeft school. WeLurk late. WeStrike straight. WeSing sin. WeThin gin. WeJazz June. WeDie soon. Gwendolyn Brooks  |

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**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)  |
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| 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 melike a bird of prey, the profile of nightslanted against morning. I turnthis way--the stone lets me go.I turn that way--I'm insidethe Vietnam Veterans Memorialagain, depending on the lightto make a difference.I go down the 58,022 names,half-expecting to findmy 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 blousebut when she walks awaythe 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 floatscloser to me, then his pale eyeslook through mine. I'm a window.He's lost his right arminside the stone. In the black mirrora woman's trying to erase names:No, she's brushing a boy's hair. |  |