

1. Riley Grace Saenim (Wisconsin)

An Apology
By Julia Ward Howe

For A Warm Word Spoken

I spake, perhaps, too sharp a word

For one bred up in modesty,

But base injustice, trivial scorn

On honor heaped, had angered me.

The smile of courtesy forsook

These lips, so timid even for good,

While o'er the paleness of my brow

Flashed crimson, the indignant blood.

Nor could I to the contest bring

The trained weapon of the mind,

Snatching from Reason's armory

Such shafts as grief had left behind.

Grief for the faltering of the Age,

Grief for my country and my race,

Grief to sit here with Christian men,

That boast their want of Christian grace.

I say not that the man I praise
By that poor tribute stands more high,
I say not that the man I blame
Be not of purer worth than I;
But when I move reluctant lips
For holy Justice, human Right,
The sacred cause I strive to plead
Lends me its favor and its might.
And I must argue from the faith
Which gave the fervor of my youth,
Or keep such silence as yon stars,
That only look and live God's truth.

2. Jayda Dawn (Indiana)

Why We Oppose Pockets for Women **By Alice Duer Miller**

1. Because pockets are not a natural right.
2. Because the great majority of women do not want pockets. If they did they
would have them.
3. Because whenever women have had pockets they have not used them.
4. Because women are required to carry enough things as it is, without the
additional burden of pockets.
5. Because it would make dissension between husband and wife as to whose
pockets were to be filled.
6. Because it would destroy man's chivalry toward woman, if he did not have to
carry all her things in his pockets.
7. Because men are men, and women are women. We must not fly in the face of
nature.
8. Because pockets have been used by men to carry tobacco, pipes, whiskey

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flasks, chewing gum and compromising letters. We see no reason to suppose that women would use them more wisely.

3. Aarvi Shah (Alabama)

Learning to Read
By Frances Ellen Watkins Harper

Very soon the Yankee teachers

 Came down and set up school;

But, oh! how the Rebs did hate it,—

 It was agin' their rule.

Our masters always tried to hide

 Book learning from our eyes;

Knowledge did'nt agree with slavery—

 'Twould make us all too wise.

But some of us would try to steal

 A little from the book.

And put the words together,

 And learn by hook or crook.

I remember Uncle Caldwell,

 Who took pot liquor fat

And greased the pages of his book,

And hid it in his hat.

And had his master ever seen
The leaves upon his head,
He'd have thought them greasy papers,
But nothing to be read.

And there was Mr. Turner's Ben,
Who heard the children spell,
And picked the words right up by heart,
And learned to read 'em well.

Well, the Northern folks kept sending
The Yankee teachers down;
And they stood right up and helped us,
Though Rebs did sneer and frown.

And I longed to read my Bible,
For precious words it said;
But when I begun to learn it,
Folks just shook their heads,

And said there is no use trying,
Oh! Chloe, you're too late;

But as I was rising sixty,

I had no time to wait.

So I got a pair of glasses,

And straight to work I went,

And never stopped till I could read

The hymns and Testament.

Then I got a little cabin

A place to call my own—

And I felt independent

As the queen upon her throne.

4. MajieAhna Winfrey (Nebraska)

Militants to Certain Other Women **By Katharine Rolston Fisher**

You who pass coldly by when the police rush upon us,

When they wrench away our banners,

(Beautiful banners whose colors cry a demand for liberty)

You who criticize or condemn

(Declaring you “believe in suffrage,

Worked for it in your state, and your mother

knew Susan B. Anthony”)

Can you think in terms of a nation?

Could you die, (or face ridicule) for your belief?

For the freedom of women, for your freedom,

we are fighting;

For your safety we face danger, bear torture;

For your honor endure untellable insult.

To win democracy for you we defend the banners of democracy

Till our banners and our bodies

Are flung together on the pavement,

Waiting at the gates of government,

We have made of our weariness a symbol

Of women's long wait for justice.

We have borne the hunger and hardship of prison,

To open people's eyes

To men's determination to imprison the power of women.

You women who pass coldly by,

Do you imagine your freedom is coming

As a summer wind blows over fields?

Slowly it has advanced by a sixty-years' war,

(Those who have fought in it have not forgotten)

And that war is not won.

Strongly entrenched, the foe sits plotting.

Close to his lines our banners fly,

Signalling where to direct the fire,

Greater forces are needed, reserves and recruits.

Are you for winning or for waiting,

Women who watch the banners go down?

Women who say, "Suffrage is coming,"

While suffrage goes by you into Prussia?

Cease to be content with applauding speeches, and praising politicians.

Patience is shameful.

Awake, rise, and act.

5. Rory Berg (Georgia)

Song of Myself, 26
By Walt Whitman

Now I will do nothing but listen,

To accrue what I hear into this song, to let sounds contribute toward it.

I hear bravuras of birds, bustle of growing wheat, gossip of flames, clack of sticks
cooking my meals,

I hear the sound I love, the sound of the human voice,

I hear all sounds running together, combined, fused or following,

Sounds of the city and sounds out of the city, sounds of the day and night,

Talkative young ones to those that like them, the loud laugh of work-people at
their meals,

The angry base of disjointed friendship, the faint tones of the sick,

The judge with hands tight to the desk, his pallid lips pronouncing a
death-sentence,

The heave'e'yo of stevedores unlading ships by the wharves, the refrain of the
anchor-lifters,

The ring of alarm-bells, the cry of fire, the whirr of swift-streaking engines and
hose carts with premonitory tinkles and color'd lights,

The steam-whistle, the solid roll of the train of approaching cars,
The slow march play'd at the head of the association marching two and two,
(They go to guard some corpse, the flag-tops are draped with black muslin.)

I hear the violoncello, ('tis the young man's heart's complaint,)
I hear the key'd cornet, it glides quickly in through my ears,
It shakes mad-sweet pangs through my belly and breast.

I hear the chorus, it is a grand opera,
Ah this indeed is music—this suits me.

A tenor large and fresh as the creation fills me,
The orbic flex of his mouth is pouring and filling me full.

I hear the train'd soprano (what work with hers is this?)
The orchestra whirls me wider than Uranus flies,
It wrenches such ardors from me I did not know I possess'd them,
It sails me, I dab with bare feet, they are lick'd by the indolent waves,
I am cut by bitter and angry hail, I lose my breath,
Steep'd amid honey'd morphine, my windpipe throttled in fakes of death,
At length let up again to feel the puzzle of puzzles,
And that we call Being.

6. Lillian Baker (Arkansas)

Medusa
By Louise Bogan

I had come to the house, in a cave of trees,
Facing a sheer sky.
Everything moved,—a bell hung ready to strike,
Sun and reflection wheeled by.

When the bare eyes were before me
And the hissing hair,
Held up at a window, seen through a door.
The stiff bald eyes, the serpents on the forehead
Formed in the air.

This is a dead scene forever now.
Nothing will ever stir.
The end will never brighten it more than this,
Nor the rain blur.

The water will always fall, and will not fall,
And the tipped bell make no sound.

The grass will always be growing for hay

Deep on the ground.

And I shall stand here like a shadow

Under the great balanced day,

My eyes on the yellow dust, that was lifting in the wind,

And does not drift away.

7. Miriam Mantara (Kansas)

Conscience
By Henry David Thoreau

Conscience is instinct bred in the house,
Feeling and Thinking propagate the sin
By an unnatural breeding in and in.
I say, Turn it out doors,
Into the moors.
I love a life whose plot is simple,
And does not thicken with every pimple,
A soul so sound no sickly conscience binds it,
That makes the universe no worse than 't finds it.
I love an earnest soul,
Whose mighty joy and sorrow
Are not drowned in a bowl,
And brought to life to-morrow
That lives one tragedy,
And not seventy;
A conscience worth keeping,
Laughing not weeping;

A conscience wise and steady,
And for ever ready;
Not changing with events,
Dealing in compliments;
A conscience exercised about
Large things, where one may doubt.
I love a soul not all of wood,
Predestinated to be good,
But true to the backbone
Unto itself alone,
And false to none;
Born to its own affairs,
Its own joys and own cares;
By whom the work which God begun
Is finished, and not undone;
Taken up where he left off,
Whether to worship or to scoff;
If not good, why then evil,
If not good god, good devil.
Goodness!—you hypocrite, come out of that,
Live your life, do your work, then take your hat.
I have no patience towards
Such conscientious cowards.

Give me simple laboring folk,
Who love their work,
Whose virtue is a song
To cheer God along.

8. Emma Oleson (Iowa)

My Grandmother's Love Letters
By Hart Crane

There are no stars tonight
But those of memory.
Yet how much room for memory there is
In the loose girdle of soft rain.

There is even room enough
For the letters of my mother's mother,
Elizabeth,
That have been pressed so long
Into a corner of the roof
That they are brown and soft,
And liable to melt as snow.

Over the greatness of such space
Steps must be gentle.
It is all hung by an invisible white hair.
It trembles as birch limbs webbing the air.

And I ask myself:

“Are your fingers long enough to play

Old keys that are but echoes:

Is the silence strong enough

To carry back the music to its source

And back to you again

As though to her?”

Yet I would lead my grandmother by the hand

Through much of what she would not understand;

And so I stumble. And the rain continues on the roof

With such a sound of gently pitying laughter.

9. Mallory Lott (Louisiana)

Poetry
By 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 that there is
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 twinkling his skin like a horse that feels a flea, the

base—

ball fan, the statistician—case after case

could be cited did

one wish it; 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 autocrats 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, in defiance of their
opinion—

the raw material of poetry in

all its rawness, and

that which is on the other hand,

genuine, then you are interested in poetry.

10. Sarah Wheatley (Oklahoma)

The Paradox
By Paul Laurence Dunbar

I am the mother of sorrows,

I am the ender of grief;

I am the bud and the blossom,

I am the late-falling leaf.

I am thy priest and thy poet,

I am thy serf and thy king;

I cure the tears of the heartsick,

When I come near they shall sing.

White are my hands as the snowdrop;

Swart are my fingers as clay;

Dark is my frown as the midnight,

Fair is my brow as the day.

Battle and war are my minions,

Doing my will as divine;

I am the calmer of passions,

Peace is a nursling of mine.

Speak to me gently or curse me,
 Seek me or fly from my sight;
I am thy fool in the morning,
 Thou art my slave in the night.

Down to the grave will I take thee,
 Out from the noise of the strife;
Then shalt thou see me and know me—
 Death, then, no longer, but life.

Then shalt thou sing at my coming,
 Kiss me with passionate breath,
Clasp me and smile to have thought me
 Aught save the foeman of Death.

Come to me, brother, when weary,
 Come when thy lonely heart swells;
I'll guide thy footsteps and lead thee
 Down where the Dream Woman dwells.

11. Bella Slone (Kentucky)

She Walketh Veiled and Sleeping
By Charlotte Perkins Gilman

She walketh veiled and sleeping,
For she knoweth not her power;
She obeyeth but the pleading
Of her heart, and the high leading
Of her soul, unto this hour.
Slow advancing, halting, creeping,
Comes the Woman to the hour!—
She walketh veiled and sleeping,
For she knoweth not her power.

12. Elayjah Earles (Mississippi)

Aunt Sue's Stories
By Langston Hughes

Aunt Sue has a head full of stories.

Aunt Sue has a whole heart full of stories.

Summer nights on the front porch

Aunt Sue cuddles a brown-faced child to her bosom

And tells him stories.

Black slaves

Working in the hot sun,

And black slaves

Walking in the dewy night,

And black slaves

Singing sorrow songs on the banks of a mighty river

Mingle themselves softly

In the flow of old Aunt Sue's voice,

Mingle themselves softly

In the dark shadows that cross and recross

Aunt Sue's stories.

And the dark-faced child, listening,
Knows that Aunt Sue's stories are real stories.
He knows that Aunt Sue
Never got her stories out of any book at all,
But that they came
Right out of her own life.

And the dark-faced child is quiet
Of a summer night
Listening to Aunt Sue's stories.

13. Eliza Aldridge (Michigan)

Introduction
By Alice Duer Miller

Father, what is a Legislature?

A representative body elected by the people of the state.

Are women people?

No, my son, criminals, lunatics and women are not people.

Do legislators legislate for nothing?

Oh, no; they are paid a salary.

By whom?

By the people.

Are women people?

Of course, my son, just as much as men are.

14. Sarah Williamson (Tennessee)

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But those of memory.
Yet how much room for memory there is
In the loose girdle of soft rain.

There is even room enough
For the letters of my mother's mother,
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That have been pressed so long
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15. David D'Aguilar (Puerto Rico)

A Nation's Strength
By William Ralph Emerson

What makes a nation's pillars high

And its foundations strong?

What makes it mighty to defy

The foes that round it throng?

It is not gold. Its kingdoms grand

Go down in battle shock;

Its shafts are laid on sinking sand,

Not on abiding rock.

Is it the sword? Ask the red dust

Of empires passed away;

The blood has turned their stones to rust,

Their glory to decay.

And is it pride? Ah, that bright crown

Has seemed to nations sweet;

But God has struck its luster down

In ashes at his feet.

Not gold but only men can make
A people great and strong;
Men who for truth and honor's sake
Stand fast and suffer long.

Brave men who work while others sleep,
Who dare while others fly...
They build a nation's pillars deep
And lift them to the sky.

16. Esinam Agama (Florida)

Ships that Pass in the Night
By Paul Laurence Dunbar

Out in the sky the great dark clouds are massing;
I look far out into the pregnant night,
Where I can hear a solemn booming gun
And catch the gleaming of a random light,
That tells me that the ship I seek is passing, passing.

My tearful eyes my soul's deep hurt are glassing;
For I would hail and check that ship of ships.
I stretch my hands imploring, cry aloud,
My voice falls dead a foot from mine own lips,
And but its ghost doth reach that vessel, passing, passing.

O Earth, O Sky, O Ocean, both surpassing,
O heart of mine, O soul that dreads the dark!
Is there no hope for me? Is there no way
That I may sight and check that speeding bark
Which out of sight and sound is passing, passing?

17. Salvador Gonzalez (Missouri)

Representation
By Alice Duer Miller

("My wife is against suffrage, and that settles me."—Vice-President Marshall.)

I.

My wife dislikes the income tax,

And so I cannot pay it;

She thinks that golf all interest lacks,

So now I never play it;

She is opposed to tolls repeal

(Though why I cannot say),

But woman's duty is to feel,

And man's is to obey.

II.

I'm in a hard position for a perfect gentleman,

I want to please the ladies, but I don't see how I can,

My present wife's a suffragist, and counts on my support,

But my mother is an anti, of a rather biting sort;

One grandmother is on the fence, the other much opposed,

And my sister lives in Oregon, she thinks the question's closed;

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Each one is counting on my vote to represent her view.

Now what should you think proper for a gentleman to do?

18. Jaden Conley (Illinois)

Chicago
By Carl Sandburg

Hog Butcher for the World,
Tool maker, Stacker of Wheat,
Player with Railroads and the Nation's
Freight Handler;
Stormy, husky, brawling,
City of the Big Shoulders:

They tell me you are wicked and I believe them, for I have seen your
painted women under the gas lamps luring the farm boys.

And they tell me you are crooked and I answer: yes, it is true I have seen the
gunman kill and go free to kill again.

And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is: On the faces of women and
children I have seen the marks of wanton hunger.

And having answered so I turn once more to those who sneer at this my city,
and I give them back the sneer and say to them:

Come and show me another city with lifted head singing so proud to be alive
and coarse and strong and cunning.

Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on job, here is a tall bold

slugger set vivid against the little soft cities;
Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action, cunning as a savage pitted
against the wilderness,
Bareheaded,
Shoveling,
Wrecking,
Planning,
Building, breaking, rebuilding,
Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth, laughing with white teeth,
Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing as a young man laughs,
Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has never lost a battle,
Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is the pulse, and under his ribs
the heart of the people,
Laughing!
Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling laughter of Youth, half-naked,
sweating, proud to be Hog Butcher, Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat, Player
with Railroads and Freight Handler to the Nation.