

Metaphor  
Eve Merriam

Morning is  
a new sheet of paper  
for you to write on.

Whatever you want to say,  
all day,  
until night  
folds it up  
and files it away.

The bright words and the dark words  
are gone  
until dawn  
and a new day  
to write on.

The Monkey  
Shel Silverstein

1 little monkey  
Was goin' 2 the store  
When he saw a banana 3  
He'd never climbed be4.  
By 5 o'clock that evenin'  
He was 6 with a stomach ache  
'Cause 7 green bananas  
Was what the monkey 8.

By 9 o'clock that evenin'  
That monkey was quite ill,  
So 10 we called the doctor  
Who was 11 on the hill.  
The doctor said, "You're almost dead.  
Don't eat green bananas no more."  
The sick little monkey groaned and said,  
"But that's what I 1-2 the 3-4."

## Maybe Dats Youwr Pwoblem Too by Jim Hall

All my pwoblems  
who knows, maybe evwybody's pwoblems  
is due to da fact, due to da awful twuth  
dat I am SPIDERMAN.  
I know. I know. All da dumb jokes:  
No flies on you, ha ha,  
and da ones about what do I do wit all  
doze extwa legs in bed. Well, dat's funny yeah.  
But you twy being  
SPIDERMAN for a month or two. Go ahead.  
You get doze cwazy calls fwom da  
Gubbener askin you to twap some booglar who's  
only twying to wip off color T.V. sets.  
Now, what do I cawre about T.V. sets?  
But I pull on da suit, da stinkin suit,  
wit da sucker cups on da fingers,  
and get my wopes and wittle bundle of  
equipment and den I go flying like cwazy  
acwoss da town fwom woof top to woof top.  
Till der he is. Some poor dumb color T.V. slob  
and I fall on him and we westle a widdle  
until I get him all woped. So big deal.  
You tink when you SPIDERMAN  
der's sometin big going to happen to you.  
Well, I tell you what. It don't happen dat way.

Nuttin happens. Gubbener calls, I go.  
Bwing him to powice, Gubbener calls again,  
like dat over and over.  
I tink I twy sometin diffunt. I tink I twy  
sometin excitin like wacing cawrs. Sometin to  
make  
my heart beat at a difwent wate.  
But den you just can't quit being sometin like  
SPIDERMAN.  
You SPIDERMAN for life. Fowever. I can't even  
buin my suit. It won't buin. It's fwame wesistent.  
So maybe dat's youwr pwoblem too, who knows.  
Maybe dat's da whole pwoblem wif evwythin.  
Nobody can buin der suits, dey all fwame  
wesistent.  
Who knows?

## Valentine for Ernest Mann

Naoimi Shihab Nye

You can't order a poem like you order a taco.  
Walk up to the counter, say, "I'll take two"  
and expect it to be handed back to you  
on a shiny plate.

Still, I like your spirit.  
Anyone who says, "Here's my address,  
write me a poem," deserves something in reply.  
So I'll tell a secret instead:  
poems hide. In the bottoms of our shoes,  
they are sleeping. They are the shadows  
drifting across our ceilings the moment  
before we wake up. What we have to do  
is live in a way that lets us find them.

Once I knew a man who gave his wife  
two skunks for a valentine.  
he couldn't understand why she was crying.  
"I thought they had such beautiful eyes."  
And he was serious. He was a serious man  
who lived in a serious way. Nothing was ugly  
just because the world said so. He really  
*liked* those skunks. So, he re-invented them  
as valentines and they became beautiful.  
At least, to him. And the poems that had been hiding  
in the eyes of skunks for centuries  
crawled out and curled up at his feet.

Maybe if we re-invent whatever our lives give us  
we find poems. Check your garage, the odd sock  
in your drawer, the person you almost like, but not quite.  
And let me know.

## Identity

Julio Noboa Polanco

Let them be as flowers,  
always watered, fed, guarded, admired,  
but harnessed to a pot of dirt.

I'd rather be a tall, ugly weed,  
clinging on cliffs, like an eagle  
wind-wavering above high, jagged rocks.

To have broken through the surface of  
stone, to live, to feel exposed to the  
madness of the vast, eternal sky.  
To be swayed by the breezes of an  
ancient sea, carrying my soul, my seed,  
beyond the mountains of time or into  
the abyss of the bizarre.

I'd rather be unseen, and if then  
shunned by everyone, than to be a  
pleasant smelling flower, growing in  
clusters in the fertile valley, where  
they're praised, handled, and plucked  
by greedy, human hands.

I'd rather smell of musty, green stench  
than of sweet, fragrant lilac.  
If I could stand alone, strong and free,  
I'd rather be a tall, ugly weed.

## Dream Deferred

Langston Hughes

Hold fast to dreams  
For if dreams die  
Life is a broken-winged bird  
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams  
For when dreams go  
Life is a barren field  
Frozen with snow.