

# Prize Poetry, 1936

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## PORTRAITS

### Martha

To her, the sun, the moon, the stars  
Grow dim beside a room kept neat.  
She will not know the bliss of Heaven  
Should dust deface a golden street.

### Cat

Serene and blandly satisfied,  
With calm, appraising eye,  
She sits, complacent in her pride,  
And sees the world go by.

Petted and spoiled and comforted,  
All homage is her due.  
Then when Her Grace is surfeited  
She slips away from you.

### Snake

I know her well; for is she not  
Soul of my soul, my better part?  
We see things always eye to eye,  
And whisper of them heart to heart.  
Often we've caught the vagrant word,  
Or wept for breathless Art's dear sake—  
But oh, my dear, be careful, do!  
Whatever she can get, she'll take!

### A Man I Do Not Like.

A thought, against his seamless mind  
Beats with a little hollow thud.  
But could it enter, it might find  
Strangulation in the mud!

### Mary

She does not know if quilts or drapes  
Combine to match the paper;  
And social trends and fashion's shapes  
Will usually escape her.  
But she will catch the errant grace  
In music, poem, or gesture,  
And find in a submissive face  
A soul's immortal vesture.

**SONGS FOR A DAY****Day That Was Mine**

Day that was mine—

Gently as maidens' feet upon a hill  
Where willows sweetly rustle and are still,  
Trailing your dimming hours upon the grass,  
Sun-broidered draperies, softly you pass.

Day that was mine,  
Leave me one radiant hour, always to keep  
Changeless, forever mine . . . So shall I sleep.  
Tranquil and comforted, soothed by your touch,  
Day that was mine, day I have loved so much!

**Pastorale**

It was an April morning  
When first I saw you pass;  
A mad-cap April morning  
With young lambs on the grass.

Through meadow-green you wandered,  
You, beautiful and young.  
All grass and flowers and April  
Were hymns to beauty sung.

I was a watchful shepherd:  
None stole my lambs away.  
But my true heart—I lost it  
On that sweet April day.

**If You Would Come**

If you would come, this luminous flame  
Sedately burning at my feet,  
These phantoms of a poet's brain,  
Like deer on mountains, shy and fleet,  
Would burst their bonds of silence numb  
If you would come—if you would come.

Upon my window, fingers tap.  
Crisp rustlings would betray your tread.  
Flame, fantasy and I  
Await you; but the hour is sped.  
Dead leaves upon the walk, the rain,  
These only come again—again.

These are my visitors tonight;  
These only come to wish me well.  
My book drops leaden in the light  
That dies to darkness, and the spell  
Falls back on printed things still dumb.  
You did not come—you did not come!

**Extasie**

There is no poetry that bears your name;  
 No music individual to you  
 Woos the capricious jade of men's acclaim  
 With sharp cacophony or accents new.  
 Yet every poem claims you for its own,  
 And strain with strain harmonically vies,  
 Till you, creator and omniscient grown,  
 Embrace them all, oh beautiful and wise!

**REFLECTIONS****Last Watch**

A twisted crushing silence  
 Broods on the room  
 Heavy with grief.

Candles, wan and guttering,  
 Consort with shadows  
 Where once the echoes of her laughter  
 Were flickering sunbeams  
 On limpid water.

In the kitchen  
 The clocks race,  
 Swollen with time and self-importance.

**Dirge**

I did not feel the winter's breath  
 For you were summer to my veins.  
 When summer's locusts droned to death,  
 You were the spring's renewing rains.  
 But now, the spring with subtle art  
 Is come, and winter's in my heart.

**Sonnet**

When this proud flesh shall lie insensate clay,  
 Poor humbled dust within its narrow berth,  
 Knowing no sun, moon, stars, or night from day,  
 Or aught of tranquil radiance in the earth,  
 Shall all it loved be never loved again—  
 (The earth's slow melting from the rigorous frost,  
 The gentle, searching fingers of the rain,  
 Strong hills that stand sun-crowned, with snow embossed?)

Shall there be sun and moon though eyes be blind?  
 Shall songs be sung though ears be deaf to hear?  
 Or shall the finite spaces of the mind,  
 Dark to each single joy, yet know them dear  
 In that grim silence when my tryst I keep  
 With other dust that laid it down to sleep?