

"If We Must Die" by Claude McKay (*sonnet*)

If we must die, let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
Making their mock at our accursed lot.
If we must die, O let us nobly die
So that our precious blood may not be shed
In vain; then even the monsters we defy
Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!
O kinsmen! We must meet the common foe!
Though far outnumbered let us show us brave,
And for their thousand blows deal one death blow!
What though before us lies the open grave?
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!

Malcolm X, February 1965

BY E. ETHELBERT MILLER

i will die this month. how
i do not know. still there

is much work to be done. i
am afraid not for myself but
for betty and the girls. some
nights i stay awake looking
out the window, a gun in my
hand. i know how cruel people
can be. i have known hatred and
blindness. there are brothers
waiting to do me harm. i will
die for them. i will love them
as only i can. may allah be my
witness.

The Slave Auction

BY FRANCES ELLEN WATKINS HARPER

The sale began—young girls were there,
Defenseless in their wretchedness,
Whose stifled sobs of deep despair

Revealed their anguish and distress.

And mothers stood, with streaming eyes,
And saw their dearest children sold;
Unheeded rose their bitter cries,
While tyrants bartered them for gold.

And woman, with her love and truth—
For these in sable forms may dwell—
Gazed on the husband of her youth,
With anguish none may paint or tell.

And men, whose sole crime was their hue,
The impress of their Maker's hand,
And frail and shrinking children too,
Were gathered in that mournful band.

Ye who have laid your loved to rest,
And wept above their lifeless clay,
Know not the anguish of that breast,
Whose loved are rudely torn away.

Ye may not know how desolate
Are bosoms rudely forced to part,
And how a dull and heavy weight
Will press the life-drops from the heart.

For A Lady I Know by countee cullen

She even thinks that up in heaven
Her class lies late and snores

While poor black cherubs rise at seven
To do celestial chores.

Carlolchelledawson.com
Powerofprogeny.com

SONIA SANCHEZ

right on: white america

1970

this country might have
been a pio
neer land
once.
but. there ain't
no mo
indians blowing
custer's mind
with a different
image of america.
this country
might have
needed shoot/
outs/ daily/
once.
but. there ain't
no mo real/ white allamerican
bad/guys.
just.
u & me
blk/ and un/armed.
this country might have
been a pio
neer land once.
and it still is.
check out
the falling
gun/shells on our blk/ tomorrows.

YOUR TURN!

YOUR TURN! Free-verse poem:

- Experiment with lowercase letters, periods, and other punctuation.
- Experiment with enjambment: running a thought beyond the line without a strong pause or break (line break).
- Experiment with spacing.
- Experiment with using the 5 senses.

YOUR TURN!

Short poem with the rhyme scheme:

A

B

A

B

YOUR TURN!

Sonnet Template

A
B
A
B
C
D
C
D
E
F
E
F
G
G

Poem with rhyme scheme

A
B
A
B

A
B
A
B

A
B
A
B

A
B
A
B

Sample Protest Signs



