

## A Sonnet of Sonnets...

Your job: write your Formal Poetry Response #2 based on one of these sonnets:

Steps:

1. <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/text/poetic-form-sonnet> (please read the page that the link above this line takes you to...so you may get a good grounding in the form of the sonnet)
2. Please read through the sonnets listed below.

*That Time of Year Thou Mayst in Me Behold* by William Shakespeare, 1564 – 1616

*Death, be not proud (Holy Sonnet 10)* by John Donne, 1572 – 1631

*Sonnet 19: When I consider how my light is spent* by John Milton 1608-1674

*Composed Upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802* by William Wordsworth, 1770 - 1850

*Leisure* by Amy Lowell, 1874 - 1925

*Interlude* by Edith Sitwell, 1887 – 1964

*If We Must Die* by Claude McKay, 1889 – 1948

*What lips my lips have kissed, and where, and why (Sonnet XLIII)* by Edna St. Vincent Millay, 1892 – 1950

*Glanmore Sonnet Number One (I)* by Seamus Heaney 1939-2013

*Atlantis—A Lost Sonnet* by Eavan Boland, b. 1944

*[Sonnet] You jerk you didn't call me up* by Bernadette Mayer, b. 1945

*American Sonnet (35)* by Wanda Coleman, 1946 – 2013

*Discourse* by Forrest Hamer, b. 1956

*Gapped Sonnet* by Suzanne Gardinier, b. 1961

3. Choose one you like and would like to write about.
4. Memorize it (if you can).
5. Write an excellent formal poetry response about the sonnet you have memorized in approximately 1000 words (10% either side is appropriate).
6. While writing this essay, be sure to check “Suppose you were asked to analyze a poem,” “The Big Idea” handout, and the comments on Formal Poetry Response #1.
7. Hand this essay in by 10pm on 11/18 to turnitin.com.



## That time of year thou mayst in me behold (Sonnet 73)

By William Shakespeare, 1564 - 1616

That time of year thou mayst in me behold  
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang  
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,  
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.  
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day  
As after sunset fadeth in the west;  
Which by and by black night doth take away,  
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.  
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,  
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,  
As the deathbed whereon it must expire,  
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.  
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,  
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

## Death, be not proud (Holy Sonnet 10)

John Donne, 1572 - 1631

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee  
Mighty and dreadful, for thou are not so;  
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow  
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.  
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,  
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,  
And soonest our best men with thee do go,  
Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.  
Thou'art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,  
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,  
And poppy'or charms can make us sleep as well  
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?  
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,  
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

Sonnet 19: When I consider how my light is spent

BY [JOHN MILTON](#) 1608-1674

When I consider how my light is spent,  
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,  
And that one Talent which is death to hide  
Lodged with me useless, though my Soul more bent  
To serve therewith my Maker, and present  
My true account, lest he returning chide;  
“Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?”  
I fondly ask. But patience, to prevent  
That murmur, soon replies, “God doth not need  
Either man’s work or his own gifts; who best  
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state  
Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed  
And post o’er Land and Ocean without rest:  
They also serve who only stand and wait.”

Composed Upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802

William Wordsworth, 1770 - 1850

Earth has not anything to show more fair:  
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by  
A sight so touching in its majesty:  
This City now doth, like a garment, wear  
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,  
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie  
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;  
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.  
Never did sun more beautifully steep  
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;  
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!  
The river glideth at his own sweet will:  
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;  
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

## Leisure

Amy Lowell, 1874 - 1925

Leisure, thou goddess of a bygone age,  
When hours were long and days sufficed to hold  
Wide-eyed delights and pleasures uncontrolled  
By shortening moments, when no gaunt presage  
Of undone duties, modern heritage,  
Haunted our happy minds; must thou withhold  
Thy presence from this over-busy world,  
And bearing silence with thee disengage  
Our twined fortunes? Deeps of unhewn woods  
Alone can cherish thee, alone possess  
Thy quiet, teeming vigor. This our crime:  
Not to have worshipped, marred by alien moods  
That sole condition of all loveliness,  
The dreaming lapse of slow, unmeasured time.

## Interlude

Edith Sitwell, 1887 - 1964

Amid this hot green glowing gloom  
A word falls with a raindrop's boom...

Like baskets of ripe fruit in air  
The bird-songs seem, suspended where

Those goldfinches—the ripe warm lights  
Peck slyly at them—take quick flights.

My feet are feathered like a bird  
Among the shadows scarcely heard;

I bring you branches green with dew  
And fruits that you may crown anew

Your whirring waspish-gilded hair  
Amid this cornucopia—

Until your warm lips bear the stains  
And bird-blood leap within your veins.



## If We Must Die

Claude McKay, 1889 - 1948

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—oh, 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!  
Oh, Kinsmen! We must meet the common foe;  
Though far outnumbered, let us show us brave,  
And for their thousand blows deal one deathblow!  
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!

What lips my lips have kissed, and where, and why (Sonnet XLIII)

Edna St. Vincent Millay, 1892 - 1950

What lips my lips have kissed, and where, and why,  
I have forgotten, and what arms have lain  
Under my head till morning; but the rain  
Is full of ghosts tonight, that tap and sigh  
Upon the glass and listen for reply,  
And in my heart there stirs a quiet pain  
For unremembered lads that not again  
Will turn to me at midnight with a cry.  
Thus in winter stands the lonely tree,  
Nor knows what birds have vanished one by one,  
Yet knows its boughs more silent than before:  
I cannot say what loves have come and gone,  
I only know that summer sang in me  
A little while, that in me sings no more.

## Glanmore Sonnets

BY [SEAMUS HEANEY](#)

For Ann Saddlemyer,  
our heartiest welcomer

I

Vowels ploughed into other: opened ground.  
The mildest February for twenty years  
Is mist bands over furrows, a deep no sound  
Vulnerable to distant gargling tractors.  
Our road is steaming, the turned-up acres breathe.  
Now the good life could be to cross a field  
And art a paradigm of earth new from the lathe  
Of ploughs. My lea is deeply tilled.  
Old ploughsocks gorge the subsoil of each sense  
And I am quickened with a redolence  
Of farmland as a dark unblown rose.  
Wait then...Breasting the mist, in sowers' aprons,  
My ghosts come striding into their spring stations.  
The dream grain whirls like freakish Easter snows.

## Atlantis—A Lost Sonnet

Eavan Boland, 1944

How on earth did it happen, I used to wonder  
that a whole city—arches, pillars, colonnades,  
not to mention vehicles and animals—had all  
one fine day gone under?

I mean, I said to myself, the world was small then.  
Surely a great city must have been missed?  
I miss our old city —

white pepper, white pudding, you and I meeting  
under fanlights and low skies to go home in it. Maybe  
what really happened is

this: the old fable-makers searched hard for a word  
to convey that what is gone is gone forever and  
never found it. And so, in the best traditions of

where we come from, they gave their sorrow a name  
and drowned it.

[Sonnet] You jerk you didn't call me up

BY [BERNADETTE MAYER](#)

You jerk you didn't call me up  
I haven't seen you in so long  
You probably have a fucking tan  
& besides that instead of making love tonight  
You're drinking your parents to the airport  
I'm through with you bourgeois boys  
All you ever do is go back to ancestral comforts  
Only money can get—even Catullus was rich but

Nowadays you guys settle for a couch  
By a soporific color cable t.v. set  
Instead of any arc of love, no wonder  
The G.I. Joe team blows it every other time

Wake up! It's the middle of the night  
You can either make love or die at the hands of the Cobra Commander

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To make love, turn to page 121.  
To die, turn to page 172.

## American Sonnet (35)

Wanda Coleman, 1946 - 2013

*boooooooooo*. spooky rippings of icy waves. this  
umpteenth time she returns--this invisible woman  
long on haunting short on ectoplasm

“you’re a good man, sistuh,” a lover sighed solongago.  
“keep your oil slick and your motor running.”

wretched stained mirrors within mirrors of  
fractured webbings like nests of manic spiders  
reflect her ruined mien (rue wiggles remorse  
squiggles woe jiggles bestride her). oozy Manes spill  
out yonder spooling in night’s lofty hour exudes  
her gloom and spew in rankling odor of heady dour

as she strives to retrieve flesh to cloak her bones  
again to thrive to keep her poisoned id alive

usta be young usta be gifted--still black

## Discourse

Forrest Hamer

And I said to him, we are continuous,  
And whatever the self is, it is never  
As we would consider, so I don't believe the possibility  
Of speaking too much of it; and he says to me,  
Continuous, exactly, with what?

What about the body: something is always pulling at it  
—gravity, responsibility, the life after this one.

My siblings and I don't speak to each other  
As much as we used to. When one of us calls, we talk  
About the care of our father, our aunts, and then  
We talk about the children. In the pauses, we acknowledge  
How different from each other we've become,  
And each of us somehow considers how much  
We miss the way things briefly were.

## Gapped Sonnet

Suzanne Gardinier, 1961

Between the blinds Past the coded locks  
Past the slanted gold bars of the day  
Smelling of all-night salt rain on the docks  
Of grief Of birth Of bergamot Of May

In the wind that lifts the harbor litter  
Wet against my fingers in a dream  
Salvaging among the tideline's bitter  
gleanings Generous Exigent Lush and lean

Your voice A tune I thought I had forgotten  
The taste of cold July brook on my tongue  
A fire built on thick ice in the winter  
The place where lost and salvaged meet and fit  
The cadences a class in grief is taught in  
The sound when frozen rivers start to run