

AUTUMN
POEMS ON THE UNDERGROUND

*Where are the songs of spring? Aye, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too. . .*

To Autumn by John Keats

The poems now riding the Tube, on autumnal themes of love and loss, are reprinted here, along with personal favourites from earlier years.

These poems range across time and space, from the anonymous 'Western wind' to a contemporary poem lamenting the decline of the house sparrow. Israeli, Italian and Irish poets appear alongside English poets from the 16th to the 21st centuries.

In their very different voices, the poets gathered together here affirm the enduring value of the written word. We hope readers who have met the poems on the Tube will enjoy them as they return to the printed page.

We are grateful to London Underground, Arts Council England and the British Council for enabling us to produce and distribute free copies of this leaflet.

The Editors
London, 2019

MY FATHER

The memory of my father is wrapped in white paper
like slices of bread for the workday.

Like a magician pulling out rabbits and towers from his hat,
he pulled out from his little body—love.

The rivers of his hands
poured into his good deeds.

YEHUDA AMICHAI
translated by Stephen Mitchell

AND SUDDENLY IT'S EVENING

Everyone is alone on the heart of the earth
pierced by a ray of sun:
and suddenly it's evening.

SALVATORE QUASIMODO
translated by Jack Bevan

FOR THE HOUSE SPARROW, IN DECLINE

Your numbers fall and it's tempting to think
you're deserting our suburbs and estates
like your cousins at Pompeii; that when you
return
to bathe in dust and build your nests again
in a roofless world where no one hears your
cheeps,
only a starling's modern mimicry
will remind you of how you once supplied
the incidental music of our lives.

PAUL FARLEY

ALL SOULS' NIGHT

My love came back to me
Under the November tree
Shelterless and dim.
He put his hand upon my shoulder,
He did not think me strange or older,
Nor I, him.

FRANCES CORNFORD

DIARY

Her diary
the way words hurry
intoeachother
and then
apart—
as the days and her body
lost out

I took the diary from her bedside
did nothing else
no sorting of clothes
touched nothing
of hers
save the diary, reading

how she wrote across days
and off the edge
of the page

KATRINA NAOMI

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Maev Kennedy, *The Guardian*

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Yehuda Amichai: 'My Father', translated by Stephen Mitchell, from *The Poetry Of Yehuda Amichai* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux 2015)

Frances Cornford: 'All Souls' Night' from *Selected Poems* (Enitharmon 1997)

Paul Farley: 'For the House Sparrow, in Decline' from *The Ice Age* (Picador 2002)

Katrina Naomi: 'Diary' from *The Girl with the Cactus Handshake* (Templar 2009)

Salvatore Quasimodo: 'And Suddenly It's Evening', translated by Jack Bevan, from Salvatore Quasimodo, *Complete Poems* (Anvil 1972)

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TO —

Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory;
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heaped for the beloved's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

P. B. SHELLEY

SONNET 73

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those trees which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds
sang.

In me thou seest the twilight of such day
As after summer 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 seest 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.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

'WESTERN WIND'

Western wind when wilt thou blow
the small rain down can rain
Christ that my love were in my arms
and I in my bed again

ANON (EARLY 16TH CENTURY)

WHEN YOU ARE OLD

When you are old and grey and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false or true,
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face;

And bending down beside the glowing bars,
Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

W. B. YEATS

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