

1- In the Hospital

By CHEN CHEN

My mother was in the hospital & everyone wanted to be my friend.

But I was busy making a list: good dog, bad citizen, short skeleton, tall mocha. Typical Tuesday.

My mother was in the hospital & no one wanted to be her friend.

Everyone wanted to be soft cooing sympathies. Very reasonable pigeons. No one had the tie & our solution to it

was to buy shinier watches. We were enamored with

what our wrists could declare. My mother was in the hospital

& I didn't want to be her friend. Typical son. Tall latte, short tale,

bad plot, great wifi in the atypical café. My mother was in the hospital

& she didn't want to be her friend. She wanted to be the family

grocery list. Low-fat yogurt, firm tofu. She didn't trust my father

to be it. *You always forget something, she said, even when*

I do the list for you. Even then.

2 - Mother to Son

By LANGSTON HUGHES

Well, son, I'll tell you:

Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

It's had tacks in it,

And splinters,

And boards torn up,

And places with no carpet on the floor—

Bare.

But all the time

I've been a-climbin' on,

And reachin' landin's,

And turnin' corners,

And sometimes goin' in the dark

Where there ain't been no light.

So boy, don't you turn back.

Don't you set down on the steps

'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.

Don't you fall now—

For I've still goin', honey,

I've still climbin',

And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

3 - Excerpt: Love that Dog By Sharon Creech

We were going for a drive
and my father said
We won't be gone long—
You come too
and so I went
and we drove and drove
until we stopped at a
red brick building...
And inside we walked
down a long cement path
past cages
with all kinds of
dogs
big and small
fat and skinny
some of them
hiding in the corner
but most of them
bark-bark-barking and
jumping up
against the wire cage
as we walked past
as if they were saying
Me! Me! Choose me!
I'm the best one!
And that's where we saw
the yellow dog
standing against the cage
with his paws curled
around the wire
and his long red tongue
hanging out
and his big black eyes
looking a little sad
and his long tail
wag-wag-wagging
as if he were saying
Me me me! Choose me!

4 - Excerpt: The Hill We Climb **By Amanda Gorman**

Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is true:
That even as we grieved, we grew
That even as we hurt, we hoped
That even as we tired, we tried
That we'll forever be tied together, victorious
Not because we will never again know defeat
but because we will never again sow division
Scripture tells us to envision
that everyone shall sit under their own vine and fig tree
And no one shall make them afraid
If we're to live up to our own time
Then victory won't lie in the blade
But in all the bridges we've made
That is the promised glade
The hill we climb
If only we dare

5 - August Evening **By Robinson Jeffers**

Though the little clouds ran southward still, the quiet autumnal
Cool of the late September evening
Seemed promising rain, rain, the change of the year, the angel
Of the sad forest. A heron flew over
With that remote ridiculous cry, "Quawk," the cry
That seems to make silence more silent. A dozen
Flops of the wing, a drooping glide, at the end of the glide
The cry, and a dozen flops of the wing.
I watched him pass on the autumn-colored sky; beyond him
Jupiter shone for evening star.
The sea's voice worked into my mood, I thought "No matter
What happens to men . . . the world's well made though."

6 - A Worm in my Pocket

By Jodee Samano

One rainy day on my way home from school,
I found a big worm and thought it was cool.

I picked up the worm with my bare hand,
held it up high thinking how grand!

The worm was so cute and wiggled a lot,
I put him in my pocket to show Mom what I'd caught.

What will she say when I show her my find?
Will she let me keep it? I hope she won't mind.

Mom was in the kitchen when I showed her what I'd found.
She screamed, "No, way! Put it back in the ground!"

Now I'm so angry, she always says "No",
If she won't let me keep it, then I will just go!