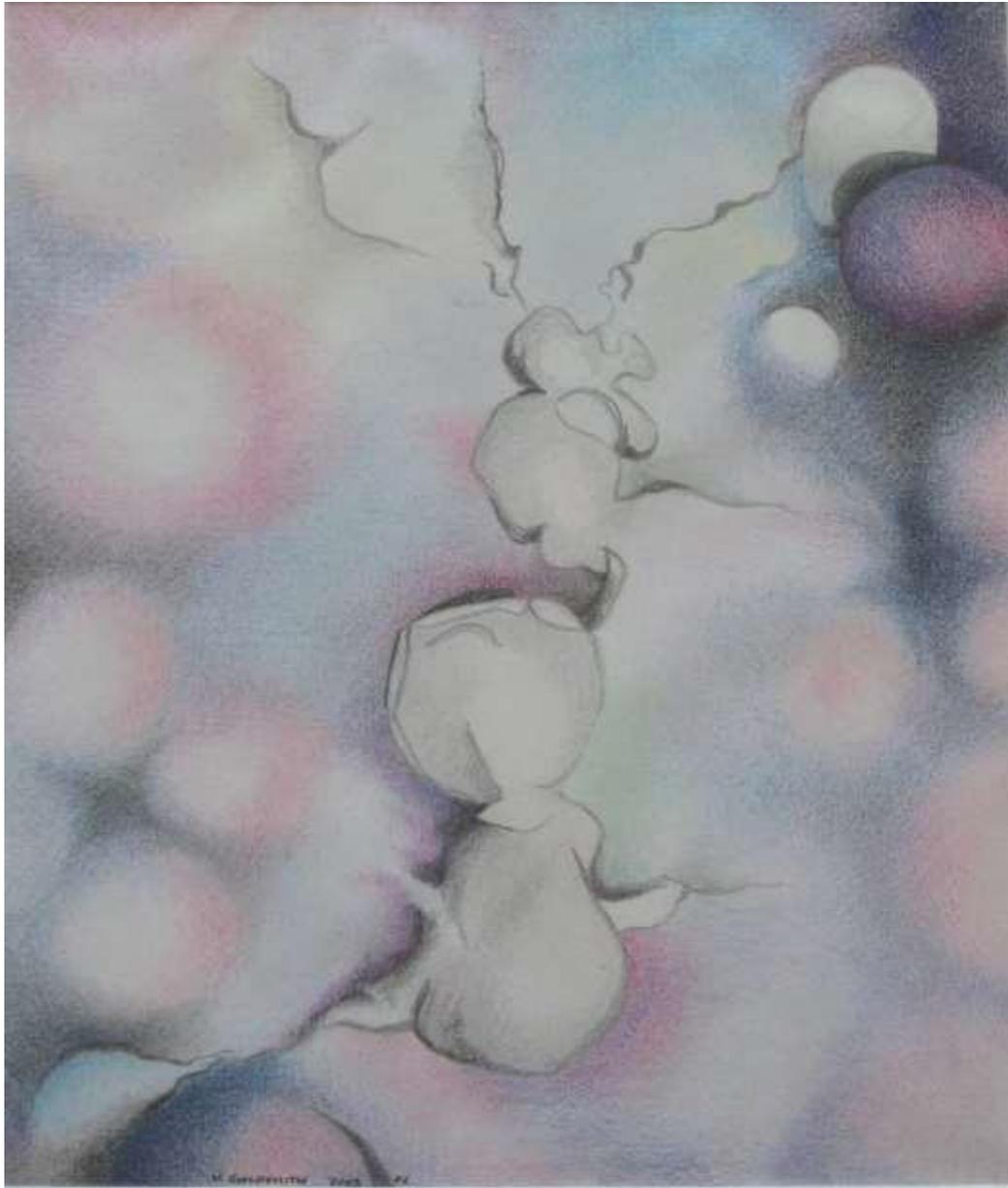


## **Managing Turbulence: A Poetry Sampler**



**The Community Events Poetry Session for the Camden Conference**

**November 20, 2022 at the Cushing Library**

**Poems Selected by Ellen Goldsmith**

**Managing Turbulence: A Poetry Sampler**  
**The Community Events Poetry Session for the 2023 Camden Conference**  
**November 20, 2022 at the Cushing Library**  
**Facilitated by Ellen Goldsmith**

*Dover Beach* by Mathew Arnold

*This Life* by Rita Dove

*Mending Wall* by Robert Frost

*Field of Vision* by Seamus Heaney

*Optimism* by Jane Hirshfield

*Instructions on Not Giving Up* by Ada Limon

*What Kind of Times Are These* by Adrienne Rich

*Tender* by Jose Antonio Rodriguez

*Security* by William Stafford

*Lines for Winter* by Mark Strand

**Gerald George**

**Nick Mills**

**Mark S. Burrows**

**Karen Meyn**

**Debby Kraft**

**Meg Weston**

**Cat Lyon**

**Claire Millikin**

**Wendy Roberts**

**Katherine Karlik**



Cover Art by Vic Goldsmith

**Dover Beach** by Matthew Arnold

The sea is calm tonight.  
The tide is full, the moon lies fair  
Upon the straits; on the French coast the light  
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,  
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.  
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!  
Only, from the long line of spray  
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,  
Listen! you hear the grating roar  
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,  
At their return, up the high strand,  
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,  
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring  
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago  
Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought  
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow  
Of human misery; we  
Find also in the sound a thought,  
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith  
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore  
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.  
But now I only hear  
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,  
Retreating, to the breath  
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear  
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true  
To one another! for the world, which seems  
To lie before us like a land of dreams,  
So various, so beautiful, so new,

Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,  
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;  
And we are here as on a darkling plain  
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,  
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

**This Life** by Rita Dove

My grandmother told me there'd be good days  
to counter the dark ones,  
with blue skies in the heart as far  
as the soul could see. She said  
you could measure a life in as many ways  
as there were to bake a pound cake,  
but you still needed real butter and eggs  
for a good one—pound cake, that is,  
but I knew what she meant. She was always  
talking around corners like that;  
she knew words carried their treasures  
like a grape cluster around its own juice.  
She loved words; she thought a book  
was a monument to the glory of creation  
and a library...well, sometimes  
just trying to describe Jubilation  
will get you a bit tongue, so let's  
leave it at that. But my grandmother  
was nobody's fool, and she'd tell anybody  
smart enough to listen. Don't let a little pain  
stop you; try as hard as you can  
every minute you're given or else  
sit down and shut up—though in her opinion,  
keeping quiet in noisy times was a sin  
against everything God and democracy  
intended us for. I know she'd like where  
I'm standing right now. She'd say  
a man who could measure his life in deeds

was larger inside than the vessel that carried him;  
she'd say he was a cluster of grapes.

My grandmother was only four feet ten  
but when she entered a room, even the books  
came to attention. Giants come in all sizes:

Sometimes a moment is a monument;  
sometimes an institution breathes—  
like a library. Like this halcyon day.

## Mending Wall by Robert Frost

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,  
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,  
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;  
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.  
The work of hunters is another thing:  
I have come after them and made repair  
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,  
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,  
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,  
No one has seen them made or heard them made,  
But at spring mending-time we find them there.  
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;  
And on a day we meet to walk the line  
And set the wall between us once again.  
We keep the wall between us as we go.  
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.  
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls  
We have to use a spell to make them balance:  
'Stay where you are until our backs are turned!'  
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.  
Oh, just another kind of out-door game,  
One on a side. It comes to little more:  
There where it is we do not need the wall:  
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.  
My apple trees will never get across  
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.  
He only says, 'Good fences make good neighbors.'  
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder  
If I could put a notion in his head:  
'*Why* do they make good neighbors? Isn't it  
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.  
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know  
What I was walling in or walling out,  
And to whom I was like to give offense.  
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,

'That wants it down.' I could say 'Elves' to him,  
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather  
He said it for himself. I see him there  
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top  
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.  
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,  
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.  
He will not go behind his father's saying,  
And he likes having thought of it so well  
He says again, 'Good fences make good neighbors.'

**Field of Vision** by Seamus Heaney

I remember this woman who sat for years  
In a wheelchair, looking straight ahead  
Out the window at sycamore trees unleafing  
And leafing at the far end of the lane.

Straight out past the TV in the corner,  
The stunted, agitated hawthorn bush,  
The same small calves with their backs to wind and rain,  
The same acre of ragwort, the same mountain.

She was steadfast as the big window itself  
Her brow was clear as the chrome bits of the chair.  
She never lamented once and she never  
Carried a spare ounce of emotional weight.

Face to face with her was an education  
Of the sort you got across a well-braced gate —  
One of those lean, clean, iron, roadside ones  
Between two whitewashed pillars, where you could see

Deeper into the country than you expected  
And discovered that the field behind the hedge  
Grew more distinctly strange as you kept standing  
Focused and drawn in by what barred the way.

**Optimism** by Jane Hirshfield

More and more I have come to admire resilience.  
Not the simple resistance of a pillow, whose foam  
returns over and over to the same shape, but the sinuous  
tenacity of a tree: finding the light newly blocked on one side,  
it turns in another. A blind intelligence, true.  
But out of such persistence arose turtles, rivers,  
mitochondria, figs—all this resinous, unretractable earth.

**Instructions on Not Giving Up** by Ada Limon

More than the fuchsia funnels breaking out  
of the crabapple tree, more than the neighbor's  
almost obscene display of cherry limbs shoving  
their cotton candy-colored blossoms to the slate  
sky of Spring rains, it's the greening of the trees  
that really gets to me. When all the shock of white  
and taffy, the world's baubles and trinkets, leave  
the pavement strewn with the confetti of aftermath,  
the leaves come. Patient, plodding, a green skin  
growing over whatever winter did to us, a return  
to the strange idea of continuous living despite  
the mess of us, the hurt, the empty. Fine then,  
I'll take it, the tree seems to say, a new slick leaf  
unfurling like a fist to an open palm, I'll take it all.

**What Kind of Times Are These** by Adrienne Rich

There's a place between two stands of trees where the grass grows uphill  
and the old revolutionary road breaks off into shadows  
near a meeting-house abandoned by the persecuted  
who disappeared into those shadows.

I've walked there picking mushrooms at the edge of dread, but don't be fooled  
this isn't a Russian poem, this is not somewhere else but here,  
our country moving closer to its own truth and dread,  
its own ways of making people disappear.

I won't tell you where the place is, the dark mesh of the woods  
meeting the unmarked strip of light —  
ghost-ridden crossroads, leafmold paradise:  
I know already who wants to buy it, sell it, make it disappear.

And I won't tell you where it is, so why do I tell you  
anything? Because you still listen, because in times like these  
to have you listen at all, it's necessary  
to talk about trees.

**Tender** by Jose Antonio Rodriguez

Thinking of how much my father loved flowering plants  
And how much my mother still does.

And of how unfathomably hard it must have been  
To clothe and feed ten children

With the most meagre of salaries for tending to citrus orchards—  
For shovelling and irrigating and shovelling again.

How he groaned when I removed his work boots  
At day's end, an exhaustion deeper than any well.

Mom says his boss was a jerk, nothing ever good enough.  
On top of everything, that empathy of her for him

Who'd never listened to her pleas because the priest said  
All the children God will allow, the priest

Who never saw her afternoons slumped by the kitchen table,  
A blank stare into somewhere

My voice could never reach.  
Nothing to do but walk away. I swear

This is not about the unwanted child,  
Or what a therapist called embodiment of the violation,

But about the strength and will to cradle the plants  
Outside—the pruning, the watering, the sheltering

In found tarps and twine against the coldest nights.  
To lean into the day's hard edge,

And still find that reserve of tenderness

For the bougainvillea, the hibiscus, the blue morning.

**Security** by William Stafford

Tomorrow will have an island. Before night  
I always find it. Then on to the next island.  
These places hidden in the day separate  
and come forward if you beckon.  
But you have to know they are there before they exist.

Some time there will be a tomorrow without any island.  
So far, I haven't let that happen, but after  
I'm gone others may become faithless and careless.  
Before them will tumble the wide unbroken sea,  
and without any hope they will stare at the horizon.

So to you, Friend, I confide my secret:  
to be a discoverer you hold close whatever  
you find, and after a while you decide  
what it is. Then, secure in where you have been,  
you turn to the open sea and let go.

**Lines for Winter** by Mark Strand

for Ros Krauss

Tell yourself  
as it gets cold and gray falls from the air  
that you will go on  
walking, hearing  
the same tune no matter where  
you find yourself—  
inside the dome of dark  
or under the cracking white  
of the moon's gaze in a valley of snow.  
Tonight as it gets cold  
tell yourself  
what you know which is nothing  
but the tune your bones play  
as you keep going. And you will be able  
for once to lie down under the small fire  
of winter stars.  
And if it happens that you cannot  
go on or turn back  
and you find yourself  
where you will be at the end,  
tell yourself  
in that final flowing of cold through your limbs  
that you love what you are.

## A Bit About the Poets

### **Mathew Arnold** (1822-1888)

Among the major Victorian writers, Matthew Arnold is unique in that his reputation rests equally upon his poetry and his poetry criticism. Meditative and rhetorical, Arnold's poetry often wrestles with problems of psychological isolation. Only a quarter of his productive life was given to writing poetry, but many of the same values, attitudes, and feelings that are expressed in his poems achieve a fuller or more balanced formulation in his prose.

### **Rita Dove** (b. 1952)

Rita Frances Dove, an American Poet and essayist, was the youngest winner of the Pulitzer Prize for her poem "Thomas and Beulah" in 1987. In 1993 she became the first African American woman to hold the title of United States Poet Laureate. Dove's work traverses a wide range of landscapes, applying an unflinching eye upon historical and political events.

### **Robert Frost** (1874 -1963)

Robert Frost was born in San Francisco, but his family moved to Lawrence, Massachusetts in 1884 following his father's death. The move was actually a return, for Frost's ancestors were originally New Englanders, and Frost became famous for his poetry's engagement with New England locales, identities, and themes.

### **Seamus Heaney** (1939 - 2013)

Seamus Heaney is widely recognized as one of the major poets of the 20th century. A native of Northern Ireland, he won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1995 "for works of lyrical beauty and ethical depth, which exalt everyday miracles and the living past."

### **Jane Hirshfield** (b. 1953)

Award-winning poet, essayist, and translator, Jane Hirshfield is the author of nine collections of poetry, as well as two collections of essays. Her work encompasses a large range of influences, drawing from the sciences as well as the world's literary, intellectual, artistic, and spiritual traditions.

**Ada Limon** (b. 1976)

Ada Limón became the 24th Poet Laureate of the United States in July of 2022. She is the author of numerous poetry collections including *The Hurting Kind*, *The Carrying*, which won the National Book Critics Circle Award for Poetry, and *Bright Dead Things*, a finalist for the National Book Award. According to Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden, Limon is a poet who connects.

**Adrienne Rich** (1929 – 2012)

During her life, poet and essayist Adrienne Rich was one of America's foremost public intellectuals. Widely read and hugely influential, Rich's career spanned seven decades and has hewed closely to the story of post-war American poetry itself. Her earliest work was formally exact and decorous, while her work of the late 1960s and 70s became increasingly radical in both its free-verse form and feminist and political content.

**Jose Antonio Rodriguez** (b. 1954)

Poet, memoirist, and translator, José Antonio Rodríguez is the author, most recently, of *This American Autopsy: Poems*, a New York Times "New and Noteworthy" pick. His work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Missouri Review*, *Pleiades*, and the Academy of American Poets website, among other publications.

**William Stafford** (1914 - 1993)

William Stafford was a conscientious objector in WWII and worked in the civilian public service camps—an experience he recorded in the prose memoir *Down My Heart* (1947). A pacifist and one of "the quiet of the land," as he often describes himself, Stafford is known for his unique method of composition, his soft-spoken voice, and his independence from social and literary expectations.

**Mark Strand** (1934 – 2014)

Mark Strand was recognized as one of the premier American poets of his generation as well as an accomplished editor, translator, and prose writer. Named the US poet laureate in 1990, Strand's career spanned five decades. The hallmarks of his style are precise language, surreal imagery, and the recurring theme of absence and negation. Later collections investigate ideas of the self with pointed, often urbane wit.