

Rose Poems

Sonnet LIV

William Shakespeare, 1609 Quarto

OH how much more doth beautie beautious feeme,
By that fweet ornament which truth doth giue,
The Rose lookes faire, but fairer we it deeme
For that fweet odor, which doth in it liue:
The Canker bloomes haue full as deepe a die,
As the perfumed tincture of the Roses,
Hang on such thornes, and play as wantonly,
When summers breath their masked buds disclofes:
But for their virtue only is their fhow,
They liue vnwoo'd, and vnrefpected fade,
Die to themfelues. Sweet Roses doe not fo,
Of their fweet deathes, are fweeteft odors made:
 And fo of you, beautious and louely youth,
 When that fhall vade, by verse diftils your truth.

Go, Lovely Rose

Edmund Waller, 1645

GO, lovely Rose—
Tell her that wastes her time and me,
 That now she knows,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be.

 Tell her that's young,
And shuns to have her graces spied,
 That hadst thou sprung
In deserts where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died.

 Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retired:
 Bid her come forth,
Suffer herself to be desired,
And not blush so to be admired.

Then die—that she
 The common fate of all things rare
 May read in thee;
 How small a part of time they share
 That are so wondrous sweet and fair!

A Red, Red Rose

Robert Burns, 1794

O MY Luve's like a red, red rose
 That 's newly sprung in June:
 O my Luve's like the melodie
 That's sweetly play'd in tune!

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
 So deep in luve am I:
 And I will luve thee still, my dear,
 Till a' the seas gang dry:

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
 And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
 I will luve thee still, my dear,
 While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only Luve,
 And fare thee weel a while!
 And I will come again, my Luve,
 Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

The Sick Rose

William Blake, 1794

O Rose thou art sick.
 The invisible worm,
 That flies in the night
 In the howling storm:

Has found out thy bed
 Of crimson joy:
 And his dark secret love
 Does thy life destroy.

From "Lifting Belly" and several other works

Gertrude Stein, beginning 1914

A rose is a rose is a rose is a rose.

Sea Rose

H.D., 1916

Rose, harsh rose
marred and with stint of petals,
meagre flower, thin,
sparse of leaf,

more precious
than a wet rose
single on a stem –
you are caught in the drift.

Stunted, with small leaf,
you are flung on the sand,
you are lifted
in the crisp sand
that drives in the wind.

Can the spice-rose
drip such acrid fragrance
hardened in a leaf?

The Rose

Jean Valentine, 2007

a labyrinth,
as if at its center,
god would be there—
but at the center, only rose,
where rose came from,
where rose grows—
& us, inside of the lips & lips:
the likenesses, the eyes, & the hair,
we are born of,
fed by, & marry with,
only flesh itself, only its passage
—out of where? to where?

Then god the mother said to Jim, in a dream,
Never mind you, Jim,
come rest again on the country porch of my knees.