"I'm Nobody"

By: Emily Dickinson

I'm nobody! Who are you?
Are you nobody, too?
Then there's a pair of us—don't tell!
They'd banish us, you know.

How dreary to be somebody!
How public, like a frog
To tell your name the livelong day
To an admiring bog!

banish—to send away or get rid of
bog—wet, marshy ground
HARLEM NIGHT SONG

by Langston Hughes

Come,
Let us roam the night together
Singing.

I love you.

Across
The Harlem roof-tops
Moon is shining.
Night sky is blue.
Stars are great drops
Of golden dew.

Down the street
A band is playing.

I love you.

Come,
Let us roam the night together
Singing.

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2. roam (rohm): wander.
Hey!

This is a companion piece to the following poem, "Hey! Hey!" which are constructed with the identical format but have opposite moods. This one contains a format where the first two lines are repeated.

Sun's a settin',
This is what I'm gonna sing,
Sun's a settin',
This is what I'm gonna sing
Feels de blues a comin',
Wonder what de blues gonna sing.
Hey! Hey!

This is a companion piece to the previous poem. While “Hey!” is more downbeat and this poem more upbeat, Hughes ends with the more optimistic piece.

Sun’s a risin’,
This is gonna be ma song.
Sun’s a risin’,
This is gonna be ma song.
I could be blue but
I been blue all night long.
FOR POETS

by Al Young

Stay beautiful
but don't stay down underground too long
Dont turn into a mole
or a worm
or a root
or a stone

Come on out into the sunlight
Breathe in trees
Knock out mountains

Commune with snakes
& be the very hero of birds A

Dont forget to poke your head up
& blink
Think

Walk all around
Swim upstream B

Dont forget to fly C
The moon was but a chin of gold
A night or two ago,
And now she turns her perfect face
Upon the world below.

Her forehead is of ampest blonde,
Her cheek like beryl stone,
Her eye unto the summer dew
The likest I have known.

Her lips of amber never part,
But what must be the smile
Upon her friend she could bestow,
Were such her silver will.

And what a privilege to be
But the remotest star.
For certainly her way might pass
Beside your twinkling door.

Her bonnet is the firmament,
The universe her shoe,
The stars the trinkets at her belt,
Her dimitics of blue.

By Emily Dickinson
Free Verse

If you are a rule breaker, free verse might be the poetry form for you. Free verse doesn't have to rhyme, but many free verse poems have their own patterns. Poets like to write in free verse because it gives them lots of freedom to express themselves.

Fog

—Carl Sandburg

The fog comes on little cat feet.

It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.
The First Dandelion

Walt Whitman

Simple and fresh and fair from winter's close emerging,
As if no artifice of fashion, business, politics, had ever been,
Forth from its sunny nook of shelter'd grass—innocent,
golden, calm as the dawn,
The spring's first dandelion shows its trustful face.

This Is Just to Say

William Carlos Williams

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold
FATHER WILLIAM
By: Lewis Carroll

Again, Carroll is making fun of an earlier, serious poem—this time by Robert Southey, a poet who was very popular in the 1800s. Southey's poem is called "The Old Man's Comforts and How He Gained Them." As you can guess, the old man in Southey's poem was far more sensible (and far less interesting) than the one in Carroll's.

"You are old, Father William," the young man said
"And your hair has become very white;
And yet you incessantly stand on your head—
Do you think, at your age, it is right?"

"In my youth," Father William replied to his son,
"I feared it might injure the brain;
But, now that I'm perfectly sure I have none,
Why, I do it again and again."

"You are old," said the youth, "as I mentioned before.
And have grown most uncommonly fat;
Yet you turned a back-somersault in at the door—
Pray, what is the reason of that?"

"In my youth," said the sage, as he shook his grey locks,
"I kept all my limbs very supple
By the use of this ointment—one shilling the box—
Allow me to sell you a couple?"
You are old," said the youth, "and your jaws are too weak
For anything tougher than suet;
Yet you finished the goose, with the bones and the beak—
Pray, how did you manage to do it?"

"In my youth," said his father, "I took to the law,
And argued each case with my wife;
And the muscular strength, which it gave to my jaw
Has lasted the rest of my life."

suet—short for "suet pudding," a pudding made from milk and fat,
which was often given to sick people because it was easy to digest
“You are old,” said the youth, “one would hardly suppose
That your eye was as steady as ever;
Yet you balanced an eel on the end of your nose—
What made you so awfully clever?”

“I have answered three questions and that is enough,”
Said his father. “Don’t give yourself airs!
Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff?
Be off, or I’ll kick you down-stairs!”
SARAH CYNTHIA SYLVIA STOUT
WOULDN'T TAKE THE GARBAGE OUT
By: Shel Silverstein

Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout
Would not take the garbage out!
She'd scour the pots and scrape the pans,
Candy the yams and spice the hams,
And though her daddy would scream and shout,
She simply would not take the garbage out.
And so it piled up to the ceilings:
Coffee grounds, potato peelings,
Brown bananas, rotten peas,
Chunks of sour cottage cheese.
It filled the can, it covered the floor,
It cracked the window and blocked the door
With bacon rinds and chicken bones,
Drippy ends of ice cream cones,
Prune pits, peach pits, orange peel,
Gloppy gloops of cold oatmeal,
Pizza crusts and withered greens,
Soggy beans and tangerines,
Crusts of black burned buttered toast,
Gristly bits of beefy roasts . . .
The garbage rolled on down the hall,
It raised the roof, it broke the wall . . .
Greasy napkins, cookie crumbs,
Globs of gooey bubble gum,
Cellophane from green baloney,
Rubbery blubbery macaroni,
Peanut butter, caked and dry,
Curdled milk and crusts of pie,
Moldy melons, dried-up mustard,
Eggshells mixed with lemon custard,
Cold french fries and rancid meat,
Yellow lumps of Cream of Wheat.
At last the garbage reached so high
That finally it touched the sky.
And all the neighbors moved away,
And none of her friends would come to play.
And finally Sarah Cynthia Stout said,
"OK, I’ll take the garbage out!"
But then, of course, it was too late . . .
The garbage reached across the state,
From New York to the Golden Gate.
And there, in the garbage she did hate,
Poor Sarah met an awful fate,
That I cannot right now relate
Because the hour is much too late.
But children, remember Sarah Stout
And always take the garbage out!