A Night of Sonnets at Hermann's Jazz Club (April 30, 2024)

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University of Victoria Humanities | University of Victoria English | University of Victoria French and Francophone Studies | University of Victoria Hispanic & Italian Studies

This event is presented by the Faculty of Humanities, and the Departments of English, French and Francophone Studies, and Hispanic and Italian Studies at the University of Victoria.

We acknowledge and respect the lək̓ʷəŋən peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Sonnets for "A Night of Sonnets"

1. Soneto en ocasión de la declaración territorial / Sonnet in Occasion of the Territorial Acknowledgement read by Dan Russek (Hispanic and Italian Studies, UVic)

En sus antiguas tierras habitamos
mientras en sus reservas languidecen.
Alto al abuso histórico merecen
las Primeras Naciones que aquí honramos.

En sus playas y bosques caminamos.
Donde el salmón y el águila amanecen,
quedan aún las voces que florecen
de viejas poblaciones que asolamos.

Contra el colonialismo, la empatía
entre la Humanidad al fin domine.
La reconciliación tenga su día

y la benevolencia ojalá anime
el camino futuro: que esta tierra
reparta a todos los frutos que encierra.

English version:

In their ancient lands we inhabit
while they languish in their reserves.
An end to historical abuse deserve
the First Nations that we here honour.

On their beaches and in their forests we tread.
Where the salmon and the eagle awake,
There still remain voices that flourish
Of old populations we tried to devastate.

Against Colonialism, may empathy
Among Humanity finally rule.
May reconciliation have its day.

Hopefully benevolence will show
The future way: may the land
Deliver to all the fruits it bears.

2. Odes 1.31 by Horace (Rome, 65 BC – 8 BC) read by Dr. Greg Rowe (Greek and Roman Studies, UVic)

Quid dedicatum poscit Apollinem
vates? quid orat de patera novum
fundens liquorem? non opimae
Sardiniae segetes feracis,

non aestuosae grata Calabriae
armenta, non aurum aut ebur Indicum,
non rura, quae Liris quieta
mordet aqua taciturnus amnis.

premant Calenam falce quibus dedit
fortuna vitem, dives ut aureis
mercator exsiccet culillis
vina Syra reparata merce,

dis carus ipsis, quippe ter et quater
anno revisens aequor Atlanticum
inpune. me pascunt olivae,
me cichorea levesque malvae.

frui paratis et valido mihi,
Latoe, dones et precor integra
cum mente nec turpem senectam
degere nec cithara carentem.

English version:

What is the poet's request to Apollo?
What does he pray for as he pours out the wine
from the bowl? Not for the rich harvests
of fertile Sardinia, nor the herds,

(they're delightful), of sunlit Calabria,
not for India's gold or its ivory,
nor fields our silent Liris's stream
carries away in the calm of its flow.

Let those that Fortune allows prune the vines,
with a Calenian knife, so rich merchants
can drink their wine from a golden cup,
wine they've purchased with Syrian goods,

who, dear to the gods, three or four times yearly,
revisit the briny Atlantic, unscathed.
I browse on olives, and chicory
and simple mallow. Apollo, the son

of Latona, let me enjoy what I have,
and, healthy in body and mind, as I ask,
live an old age not without honour,
and one not lacking the art of the lyre.

Translated by A.S. Kline (poetryintranslation.com)

3. From the *Vita Nuova* by Dante (Italy, 1265 – 1321) read by Dr. Lloyd Howard, Emeritus, Hispanic and Italian Studies, UVic)

Oltre la spera che più larga gira
passa 'l sospiro ch'esce del mio core:
intelligenza nova, che l'Amore
piangendo mette in lui, pur su lo tira.

Quand'elli è giunto là dove disira,
vede una donna, che riceve onore,
e luce sì, che per lo suo splendore
lo peregrino spirito la mira.

Vedela tal, che quando 'l mi ridice,
io no lo intendo, sì parla sottile
al cor dolente, che lo fa parlare.

So io che parla di quella gentile,
però che spesso ricorda Beatrice
sì ch'io lo 'ntendo ben, donne mie care.

English version:

Beyond the sphere that circles widest passes
the sigh that issues from my heart:
a new understanding which Love,
lamenting, imparts to him draws him ever upwards.

When he arrives where he desires to be,
he sees a lady who receives honour,
and who shines for her splendor
so that the pilgrim spirit contemplates her.

He sees her such that when he repeats this to me,
I do not understand, so subtly does he speak
to my sorrowing heart, that makes him speak.

I know he speaks of that noble one,
for he often mentions Beatrice,
so that I understand him well, my dear ladies.

(Translation from *Dante's Lyric Poetry* by Kenelm Foster and Patrick Boyde, with some minor adaptations).

4. "Desde La Torre" by Francisco de Quevedo (Spain, 1580-1645) read by Alisa Atanackovic

Retirado en la paz de estos desiertos,
con pocos, pero doctos libros juntos,
vivo en conversación con los difuntos
y escucho con mis ojos a los muertos.

Si no siempre entendidos, siempre abiertos,
o enmiendan, o fecundan mis asuntos;
y en músicos callados contrapuntos
al sueño de la vida hablan despiertos.

Las grandes almas que la muerte ausenta,
de injurias de los años, vengadora,
libra, ¡oh gran don Josef!, docta la emprenta.

En fuga irrevocable huye la hora;
pero aquella el mejor cálculo cuenta
que en la lección y estudios nos mejora.

Two English versions: From the Tower

Withdrawn to this solitary place,
With a few but learned books,
I live conversing with the dead,
listening to them with my eyes.
Open always, if not always understood,
they amend, they enrich my affairs:
in rhythms of contrapuntal silence,
awakened, they speak to the dream of life.
O Don José, for those great souls
absconded by death, the learnéd
press avenges time's slanders.
In irrevocable flight the hour flees;
but it can be counted fortunate
when we better ourselves by reading.

(Translated by Christopher Johnson)

Retired to these deserts and at peace,
and with but few, though learnèd, books beside,
I live conversing now with the deceased,
and listen with my eyes to those who died.
Open, whether or not I miss their points,
they mend or fecundate my everything,
their music's muted counterpoints when joined
with this life's dream bespeak awakening.
Great Souls absented by mortality,
in death avenging injuries of years,
the learnèd press, Oh Josef, has set free!
Hours fled forever disappear,

but they are best accounted for in letters,

read and studied, when they make us better.

(Translated by Elwin Wirkala)

5. "Que contiene una fantasía contenta con amor decente" by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (Mexico, 1648 – 1695) read by Navarra Houdin

Detente, sombra de mi bien esquivo,
imagen del hechizo que más quiero,
bella ilusión por quien alegre muero,
dulce ficción por quien penosa vivo.

Si al imán de tus gracias atractivo
sirve mi pecho de obediente acero,
¿para qué me enamoras lisonjero,
si has de burlarme luego fugitivo?

Mas blasonar no puedes satisfecho
de que triunfa de mí tu tiranía;
que aunque dejas burlado el lazo estrecho

que tu forma fantástica ceñía,
poco importa burlar brazos y pecho
si te labra prisión mi fantasía.

Two English versions:

Tarry, Shadow of my Scornful Treasure
Image of my dearest sortilege,
Fair illusion for which I gladly die,
Sweet unreality for which I painfully live,

To the compelling magnet of thy grace
Since my breast as docile steel is drawn,
Why dost thou with soft ways enamour me
If from me then in mockery though must fly?
And yet thou mayst nowise in triumph boast
That over me thy tyranny has prevailed;
For though thou breakest, mocking, the narrow coil
That girdled thy fantastic form about,
What boots it to make mock of arms and breast
If thou art prisoner of my fantasy?

(Translated by Samuel Beckett)

"Which contains a fantasy content with honorable love"

Stay, shadow of my love so tentative,
The image of bewitchment I swear by,
Illusion fair for which I joyful die,
Sweet fiction for which I so troubled live.
If to the magnet of your graces, sensitive,
My breast as steel serves, happy to comply,
Then why do you such flattering charm apply
If you must trick me later, fugitive?
But you cannot go boasting, satisfied,
That triumphs over me your tyranny:
For though you outwitted leave the bond that's tied
Around your form fantastic totally,
It matters little breast, arms to deride
If prison weaves for you my fantasy.

6. “À une passante” by Charles Baudelaire (France, 1821 – 1867) read by Dr. Silvia Colás (Hispanic and Italian Studies, UVic)

La rue assourdissante autour de moi hurlait.
Longue, mince, en grand deuil, douleur majestueuse,
Une femme passa, d'une main fastueuse
Soulevant, balançant le feston et l'ourlet;

Agile et noble, avec sa jambe de statue.
Moi, je buvais, crispé comme un extravagant,
Dans son oeil, ciel livide où germe l'ouragan,
La douceur qui fascine et le plaisir qui tue.

Un éclair... puis la nuit! — Fugitive beauté
Dont le regard m'a fait soudainement renaître,
Ne te verrai-je plus que dans l'éternité?

Ailleurs, bien loin d'ici! trop tard! *jamais* peut-être!
Car j'ignore où tu fuis, tu ne sais où je vais,
Ô toi que j'eusse aimée, ô toi qui le savais!

Two English versions: To a Passer-By

The street about me roared with a deafening sound.
Tall, slender, in heavy mourning, majestic grief,
A woman passed, with a glittering hand
Raising, swinging the hem and flounces of her skirt;

Agile and graceful, her leg was like a statue's.
Tense as in a delirium, I drank
From her eyes, pale sky where tempests germinate,
The sweetness that enthralls and the pleasure that kills.

A lightning flash... then night! Fleeting beauty
By whose glance I was suddenly reborn,
Will I see you no more before eternity?

Elsewhere, far, far from here! too late! *never* perhaps!
For I know not where you fled, you know not where I go,
O you whom I would have loved, O you who knew it!
(Translated by William Aggeler)

The deafening street roared on. Full, slim, and grand
In mourning and majestic grief, passed down
A woman, lifting with a stately hand
And swaying the black borders of her gown;

Noble and swift, her leg with statues matching;
I drank, convulsed, out of her pensive eye,
A livid sky where hurricanes were hatching,
Sweetness that charms, and joy that makes one die.

A lighting-flash — then darkness! Fleeting chance
Whose look was my rebirth — a single glance!
Through endless time shall I not meet with you?

Far off! too late! or never! — I not knowing
Who you may be, nor you where I am going —
You, whom I might have loved, who know it too!
(Translated by Roy Campbell)

7. “If I were Loved, as I Desire to be” by Lord Alfred Tennyson (English, 1809 – 1892) read by Campbell Dowler

If I were loved, as I desire to be,
What is there in the great sphere of the earth,
And range of evil between death and birth,
That I should fear, —if I were loved by thee?
All the inner, all the outer world of pain
Clear Love would pierce and cleave, if thou wert mine
As I have heard that, somewhere in the main,
Fresh-water springs come up through bitter brine.
'T were joy, not fear, claspt hand-in-hand with thee,
To wait for death--mute--careless of all ills,
Apart upon a mountain, tho' the surge
Of some new deluge from a thousand hills
Flung leagues of roaring foam into the gorge
Below us, as far on as eye could see.

8. “The Windhover” by Gerard Manley Hopkins (England, 1844 – 1889) read by Dr. Erin Kelly

To Christ our Lord

I caught this morning morning's minion, king-
dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,
As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and gliding
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
Stirred for a bird, – the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here
Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!
No wonder of it: shéer plód makes plough down sillion
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion.

9. "Rebelde" by Juana de Ibarbourou (Uruguay, 1892 – 1979) read by Kaila Lee

Caronte: yo seré un escándalo en tu barca.
Mientras las otras sombras recen, giman o lloren,
y bajo tus miradas de siniestro patriarca
las tímidas y tristes, en bajo acento, oren,

yo iré como una alondra cantando por el río
y llevaré a tu barca mi perfume salvaje
e irradiaré en las ondas del arroyo sombrío
como una azul linterna que alumbrara en el viaje.

Por más que tu no quieras, por más guiños siniestros
que me hagan tus dos ojos, en el terror maestros,
Caronte, yo en tu barca seré como un escándalo.

Y extenuada de sombra, de valor y de frío,
cuando quieras dejarme a la orilla del río,
me bajarán tus brazos cual conquista de vándalo.

English version: Rebel

Charon: I'll be a scandal in your barque.
Those other souls may pray, lament or cry
beneath your evil patriarchal eye,
while timid spirits murmur in the dark.

Not I. I'll be the lark that flits and sings.
I'll flaunt my savage musk, and I will beam
my bright blue lantern on the bleak black stream,
sailing above the crossing on my wings.

You may not like it; and although you glare
at me with baleful eyes, I just don't care.
Charon, in your barque I'll be a scandal.

Then, when I'm cold and weak and fight no more,
your arms will drop me on the other shore—
vanquished—like the captive of a Vandal.
(Translated by Catherine Chandler)

10. "Sonnet en X" by Stephane Mallarmé (France, 1842 – 1898) read by Dr. Emile Fromet de Rosnay (Department of French and Francophone Studies, UVic)

Ses purs ongles très-haut dédiant leur onyx,
L'Angoisse, ce minuit, soutient, lampadophore,
Maint rêve vespéral brûlé par le Phénix
Que ne recueille pas de cinéraire amphore

Sur les crédences, au salon vide : nul ptyx,
Aboli bibelot d'inanité sonore,
(Car le Maître est allé puiser des pleurs au Styx
Avec ce seul objet dont le Néant s'honore.)

Mais proche la croisée au nord vacante, un or
Agonise selon peut-être le décor
Des licornes ruant du feu contre une nixe,

Elle, défunte nue en le miroir, encor
Que, dans l'oubli fermé par le cadre, se fixe
De scintillations sitôt le septuor.

Two English versions:

Her pure nails on high displaying their onyx,
The lampbearer, Anguish, at midnight sustains
Those vesperal dreams that are burnt by the Phoenix
And which no funeral amphora contains

On the credenzas in the empty room: no ptyx,
Abolished shell whose resonance remains
(For the Master has gone to draw tears from the Styx
With this sole object that Nothingness attains).

But in the vacant north, adjacent to the window panes,
A dying shaft of gold illumines as it wanes
A nix sheathed in sparks that a unicorn kicks.

Though she in the oblivion that the mirror frames
Lies nude and defunct, there rains
The scintillations of the one-and-six.

(Translated by Henry Michael Weinfield)

With her pure nails offering their onyx high,
lampbearer Agony tonight sustains
many a vesperal fantasy burned by
the Phoenix, which no funerary urn contains

on the empty room’s credences: no ptyx,
abolished bauble, sonorous inanity
(Master has gone to draw tears from the Styx
with that one thing, the Void’s sole source of vanity).

Yet near the vacant northward casement dies
a gold possibly from the decorations
of unicorns lashing a nymph with flame;

dead, naked in the looking-glass she lies
though the oblivion bounded by that frame
now spans a fixed septet of scintillations.
(Translated by E. H. and A. M. Blackmore)

11. "Yo persigo una forma" by Rubén Darío (Nicaragua, 1867 - 1916) read by Mateo Serrano

Yo persigo una forma que no encuentra mi estilo,
botón de pensamiento que busca ser la rosa;
se anuncia con un beso que en mis labios se posa
el abrazo imposible de la Venus de Milo.

Adornan verdes palmas el blanco peristilo;
los astros me han predicho la visión de la Diosa;
y en mi alma reposa la luz como reposa
el ave de la luna sobre un lago tranquilo.

Y no hallo sino la palabra que huye,
la iniciación melódica que de la flauta fluye
y la barca del sueño que en el espacio boga;

y bajo la ventana de mi Bella-Durmiente,
el sollozo continuo del chorro de la fuente
y el cuello del gran cisne blanco que me interroga.

English version:

"I Seek a Form"

I seek a form my style cannot quite trace,
A bud of thought that seeks to be a rose;
A kiss upon my lips proclaims the throes
Of the Venus de Milo's impossible embrace.

Green palms adorn the white peristyle like lace;
The stars have shown me a goddess in repose;
And in my soul, a sole light lingers—glows
Like the bird of the moon on a lake's calm face.

And I find nothing but the word as it goes,
The flute's initial note as it flows,
The bark of dreams that glides through infinity,

And under my Sleeping Beauty's window sill,
The fountain jet that keeps on sobbing still,
The neck of the great white swan that questions me.

(Translated by William Ruleman)

12. Los sonetos de la muerte by Gabriela Mistral (Chile, 1889 – 1957) read by Alex Brooks and Dr. Carmen Rodríguez de France

I

Del nicho helado en que los hombres te pusieron,
te bajaré a la tierra humilde y soleada.
Que he de dormirme en ella los hombres no supieron,
y que hemos de soñar sobre la misma almohada.

Te acostaré en la tierra soleada con una
dulcedumbre de madre para el hijo dormido,
y la tierra ha de hacerse suavidades de cuna
al recibir tu cuerpo de niño dolorido.

Luego iré espolvoreando tierra y polvo de rosas,
y en la azulada y leve polvareda de luna,
los despojos livianos irán quedando presos.

Me alejaré cantando mis venganzas hermosas,
¡porque a ese hondor recóndito la mano de ninguna
bajará a disputarme tu puñado de huesos!

II

Este largo cansancio se hará mayor un día,
y el alma dirá al cuerpo que no quiere seguir
arrastrando su masa por la rosada vía,
por donde van los hombres, contentos de vivir...
Sentirás que a tu lado cavan briosamente,
que otra dormida llega a la quieta ciudad.
Esperaré que me hayan cubierto totalmente...
¡y después hablaremos por una eternidad!

Sólo entonces sabrás el por qué no madura
para las hondas huesas tu carne todavía,
tuviste que bajar, sin fatiga, a dormir.
Se hará luz en la zona de los sinos, oscura;
sabrás que en nuestra alianza signo de astros había
y, roto el pacto enorme, tenías que morir...

III

Malas manos tomaron tu vida desde el día
en que, a una señal de astros, dejara su plantel
nevado de azucenas. En gozo florecía.
Malas manos entraron trágicamente en él...
Y yo dije al Señor: -"Por las sendas mortales
le llevan. ¡Sombra amada que no saben guiar!
¡Arráncalo, Señor, a esas manos fatales
o le hundes en el largo sueño que sabes dar!
¡No le puedo gritar, no le puedo seguir!
Su barca empuja un negro viento de tempestad.
Retórnalo a mis brazos o le siegas en flor"
Se detuvo la barca rosa de su vivir...
¿Que no sé del amor, que no tuve piedad?
¡Tú, que vas a juzgarme, lo comprendes, Señor!

English version: The Sonnets of Death

I

From the freezing alcove in which men placed your bones,
down to the humble, sunny earth I'll bring you.
That I shall sleep on it, they could not have known,
nor that we are to dream on the same pillow.

I'll lay you down in the sunny earth, lay you
with the sweetness of a mother for her sleeping child,

and the earth will turn soft as a cradle
when it welcomes your body of wounded child.

Then, I will sprinkle soil and rose remnants,
and in the moon's azure and light dust cloud,
the weightless residue will slowly get caught.

I'll walk away singing my lovely vengeance,
because no other woman would reach into that shroud,
and claim the handful of bones for which I fought!

II

This long weariness will grow one day,
and the soul to the body will say that it cannot
keep dragging its weight along the rosy way,
where men go on living, happy with their lot.

You'll feel them near you, digging vigorously,
feel that the still city has taken in another dreamer.
I'll wait until they ve covered me completely…
And then you and I will talk forever!

Only then will you know why, your flesh
for the bottomless grave still unripe,
you had to come down, unwearied, to lie.

There will be light in the dark zone of destiny;
you'll know that in our bond the sign of the stars resided
and, broken the mighty pact, you had to die…

III

Harsh hands took your life, from the day,
foretold by the stars, on which it felt

it's garden with a snow of lilies overlaid.
Harsh hands tragically entered your breast…

And I said to God: "Down deadly paths
they're leading him. Beloved shadow they cannot steer!
Pull him away, God, from those fatal hands,
or sink him in the deep slumber you confer!

I can't call out for him, I cannot follow!
His boat is carried by a black storm wind.
Bring him back into my arms or his bud cut short!"

The rose rowboat of his life came to a halt…
Have I not known love? Have I not pitied?
You who will judge me, understand, my Lord!

(Translated by Langston Hughes)

13. "Ausente" by César Vallejo (Peru, 1892 - 1938) by Scarlet Bowness

Ausente! La mañana en que me vaya
más lejos de lo lejos, al Misterio,
como siguiendo inevitable raya,
tus pies resbalarán al cementerio.

Ausente! La mañana en que a la playa
del mar de sombra y del callado imperio,
como un pájaro lúgubre me vaya,
será el blanco panteón tu cautiverio.

Se habrá hecho de noche en tus miradas;
y sufrirás, y tomarás entonces
penitentes blancuras laceradas.

Ausente! Y en tus propios sufrimientos
ha de cruzar entre un llorar de bronces
una jauría de remordimientos!

English version: Absent

Absent! The morning when I go away
farther than faraway, to the Mystery,
as if following an inevitable ray,
your feet will slide into the cemetery.
Absent! The morning when I go away
like a lugubrious bird to the shore
of the dark sea and that silent empire,
the white family tomb, will be your captivity.
It will act as night in your glances;
and you'll suffer and then you'll possess
the penitent, lacerated, whitenesses.
Absent! And in your own sufferings,
will cross, between a cry of bronzes,
a dog pack of remorse!
(Translated by Rebecca Seiferle)

14. "Sonnet 65" by John Berryman (USA, 1914 – 1972) read by Dr. Francis Landy (Emeritus, Religious Studies, University of Alberta)

Once when they found me, some refrain "Quoi faire?"
Striking my hands, they say repeatedly
I muttered, although I could hear and see
I knew no one.- I am silent in my chair,
And stronger and more cold is my despair
At last, for I have come into a country

Whose vivid Queen upon no melody
Admits me. *Manchmal glaub ich, ich kann nicht mehr*.
Song follows song, the chatterer to the fire
Would follow soon ... Deep in Ur's royal pits
Sit still the courtly bodies, a little bowl
By each, attired to voluntary blitz...
In Shub-ad's grave the fingers of a girl
Were touching still, when they found her, the strings of her lyre.

15. Sonnet from Cigarette Smoke by Ronin Zeiger (Canada) read by Ronin Zeiger

Till left brain succumb to tissue coloured, Dumb,
misplaced hands and a menthol, to who?
Cohesive soft, sewn tartare throat. 'Adieu Adieu'
I owe, lingered pastiche un-heard.
A rest, a smoke-shrill drape, a coughing more,
Spilling ash on drivelled lung dead before
I choke. Preach tar sermons beating– reeling: A
slow end to infertile feeling.
From dead seas trailing best those breathy sighs, There
looms clarity neath tobacco lulls. King
Of silk souls, reigning embossed agape's rise.
Pre-partem, I'll huff. Post, I'll be, Spring
Menagerie, coming, going. The cigarette fogs
Beget my muse,
while donning rust to his worn-out ring.

16. "Not only marble, but the plastic toys" by Wendy Cope (England, 1945) read by Ted Snyders

Not only marble, but the plastic toys
From cornflake packets will outlive this rhyme:

I can't immortalize you, love - our joys
Will lie unnoticed in the vault of time.
When Mrs Thatcher has been cast in bronze
And her administration is a page
In some O-level text-book, when the dons
Have analysed the story of our age,
When travel firms sell tours of outer space
And aeroplanes take off without a sound
And Tulse Hill has become a trendy place
And Upper Norwood's on the underground
Your beauty and my name will be forgotten -
My love is true, but all my verse is rotten.

Sonnet # 55 by William Shakespeare (England, 1564 – 1616)

Not marble nor the gilded monuments
Of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme,
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone besmeared with sluttish time.
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war’s quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.
’Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So, till the Judgement that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers’ eyes.

17. Sonnet by Billy Collins (American, 1941) read by Dr. Erin Collins

All we need is fourteen lines, well, thirteen now,
and after this one just a dozen
to launch a little ship on love's storm-tossed seas,
then only ten more left like rows of beans.
How easily it goes unless you get Elizabethan
and insist the iambic bongos must be played
and rhymes positioned at the ends of lines,
one for every station of the cross.
But hang on here while we make the turn
into the final six where all will be resolved,
where longing and heartache will find an end,
where Laura will tell Petrarch to put down his pen,
take off those crazy medieval tights,
blowout the lights, and come at last to bed.