

*ON THE TEACHING OF POETRY*

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Excerpt From Ode:  
Intimations Of Immortality From  
Recollections Of Early Childhood  
By William Wordsworth

Though nothing can bring back the hour  
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;  
We will grieve not, rather find  
Strength in what remains behind;  
In the primal sympathy  
Which having been must ever be;  
In the soothing thoughts that spring  
Out of human suffering;  
In the faith that looks through death,  
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

WHEN I WAS YOUNG, MY MOTHER WOULD READ ME POETRY



ON THE TEACHING OF POETRY



ALL THINGS IN THE WORLD COME TO US THROUGH LANGUAGE



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ATENEO  
*Magisterial*  
*Lecture* SERIES

Ode to Common Things  
by Pablo Neruda



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I have a crazy,  
crazy love of things.  
I like pliers,  
and scissors.  
I love  
cups,  
rings,  
and bowls –  
not to speak, of course,  
of hats.

...

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I love  
all things,  
not just  
the grandest,  
also  
the  
infinite-  
ly  
small –  
thimbles,  
spurs,  
plates,  
and flower vases.

Oh yes,  
the planet  
is sublime!  
It's full of pipes  
weaving  
hand-held  
through tobacco smoke,  
and keys  
and salt shakers –  
everything,

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I mean,  
that is made  
by the hand of man, every little  
thing:  
shapely shoes,  
and fabric,  
and each new  
bloodless birth  
of gold,  
eyeglasses  
carpenter's nails,  
brushes,  
clocks, compasses,  
coins, and the so-soft  
softness of chairs.

Mankind has  
built  
oh so many  
perfect  
things!  
Built them of wool  
and of wood,  
of glass and  
of rope:  
remarkable  
tables,  
ships, and stairways.



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I love  
all  
things,  
not because they  
are  
passionate  
or sweet-smelling  
but because,  
I don't know,  
because  
this ocean is yours,  
and mine;  
these buttons  
and wheels  
and little  
forgotten  
treasures,

fans upon  
whose feathers  
love has scattered  
its blossoms  
glasses, knives and  
scissors –  
all bear  
the trace  
of someone's fingers  
on their handle or  
surface,  
the trace of a distant  
hand  
lost  
in the depths of  
forgetfulness.

I pause in houses,  
streets and  
elevators  
touching things,  
identifying objects  
that I secretly covet;  
this one because it rings,  
that one because  
it's as soft  
as the softness of a woman's hip,  
that one there for its deep-sea color,  
and that one for its velvet feel.

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O irrevocable  
river  
of things:  
no one can say  
that I loved  
only  
fish,  
or the plants of the  
jungle and the field,  
that I loved  
only  
those things that leap  
and climb, desire, and  
survive.

It's not true:  
many things conspired  
to tell me the whole story.  
Not only did they touch me,  
or my hand touched them:  
they were  
so close  
that they were a part  
of my being,  
they were so alive with me  
that they lived half my life  
and will die half my death.

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and will die half my death.

Harmony as an element can be found in plot when things “fall into place” or resolution takes place even if the resolution is non-resolution.

But I believe harmony is also about an awareness of the intrinsic design of harmony in nature.



Part of the literature classroom is this truth:  
truth in literature is slippery.

“You cannot debone a fish with a hammer.”

They look at me and ask, what does it mean?

**Wooden**  
**Poet Laureate Kay Ryan**

In the presence of supple  
goodness, some people  
grow less flexible,  
experiencing a woodenness  
they wouldn't have thought possible.  
It is as strange and paradoxical  
as the combined suffering  
of Pinocchio and Geppetto  
if Pinocchio had turned and said,  
I can't be human after all.



Spring and Fall  
Gerard Manley Hopkins, SJ

Márgarét, áre you gríeving  
Over Goldengrove unleaving?  
Leáves like the things of man, you  
With your fresh thoughts care for, can you?  
Ah! ás the heart grows older  
It will come to such sights colder  
By and by, nor spare a sigh  
Though worlds of wanwood leafmeal lie;  
And yet you wíll weep and know why.  
Now no matter, child, the name:  
Sórrów's spríngs áre the same.  
Nor mouth had, no nor mind, expressed  
What heart heard of, ghost guessed:  
It ís the blight man was born for,  
It is Margaret you mourn for.

**The Conditional**  
**Ada Limon**

Say tomorrow doesn't come.  
Say the moon becomes an icy pit.  
Say the sweet-gum tree is petrified.  
Say the sun's a foul black tire fire.  
Say the owl's eyes are pinpricks.  
Say the raccoon's a hot tar stain.  
Say the shirt's plastic ditch-litter.  
Say the kitchen's a cow's corpse.  
Say we never get to see it: bright  
future, stuck like a bum star, never  
coming close, never dazzling.  
Say we never meet her. Never him.  
Say we spend our last moments staring  
at each other, hands knotted together,  
clutching the dog, watching the sky burn.  
Say, It doesn't matter. Say, That would be  
enough. Say you'd still want this: us alive,  
right here, feeling lucky.

What do I know of the suffering of Pinocchio?



It gives to literature the highest kind of  
responsibility: a way to a better future.