

# **20th Century Poetry**



## **William Butler Yeats**

*The Rose* (1893)

*The Wild Swans at Coole* (1917)

*Michael Robartes and the Dancer*  
(1921)

*The Tower* (1928)

image: npr.org



## **W. H. Auden**

*Poems* (1930)

*Another Time* (1940)

*Nones* (1951)

image: [pulitzer.org](https://www.pulitzer.org)

# “Lullaby”

Lay your sleeping head, my love,  
Human on my faithless arm;  
Time and fevers burn away  
Individual beauty from  
Thoughtful children, and the grave  
Proves the child ephemeral:  
But in my arms till break of day  
Let the living creature lie,  
Mortal, guilty, but to me  
The entirely beautiful.

Soul and body have no bounds:  
To lovers as they lie upon  
Her tolerant enchanted slope  
In their ordinary swoon,  
Grave the vision Venus sends  
Of supernatural sympathy,  
Universal love and hope;  
While an abstract insight wakes  
Among the glaciers and the rocks  
The hermit's carnal ecstasy.

Certainty, fidelity

On the stroke of midnight pass

Like vibrations of a bell,

And fashionable madmen raise

Their pedantic boring cry:

Every farthing of the cost,

All the dreaded cards foretell,

Shall be paid, but from this night

Not a whisper, not a thought,

Not a kiss nor look be lost.

Beauty, midnight, vision dies:

Let the winds of dawn that blow

Softly round your dreaming head

Such a day of welcome show

Eye and knocking heart may bless,

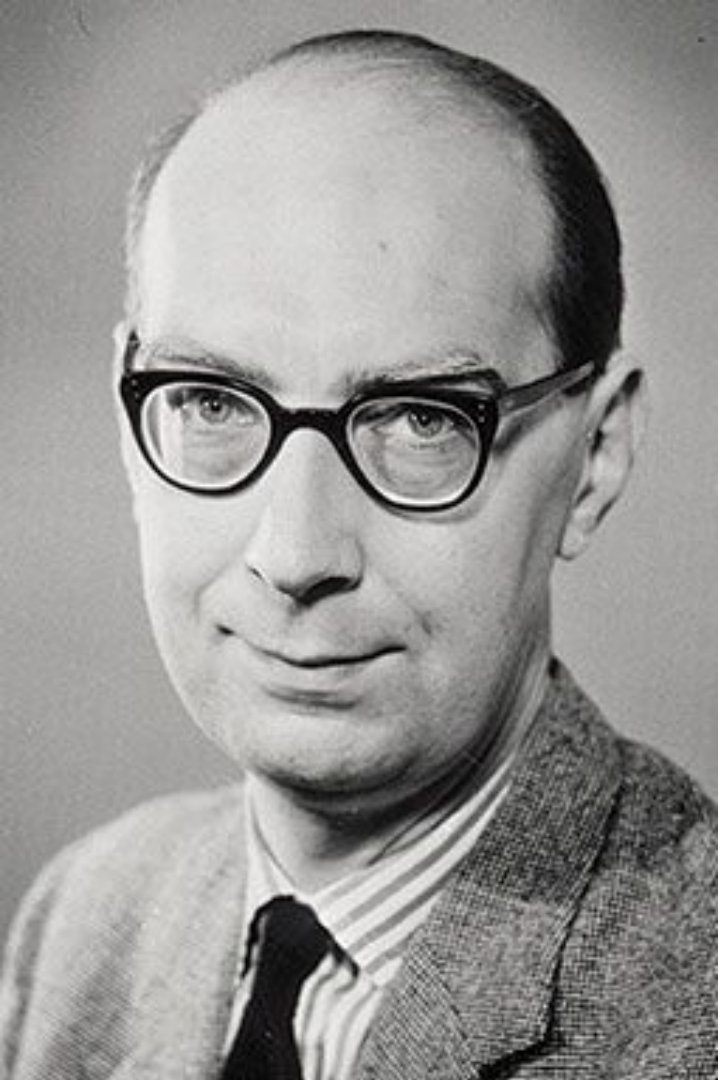
Find the mortal world enough;

Noons of dryness find you fed

By the involuntary powers,

Nights of insult let you pass

Watched by every human love.



## Philip Larkin

*The Less Deceived* (1955)

*The Whitsun Weddings* (1964)

*High Windows* (1974)

image: [philiplarkin.com](http://philiplarkin.com)

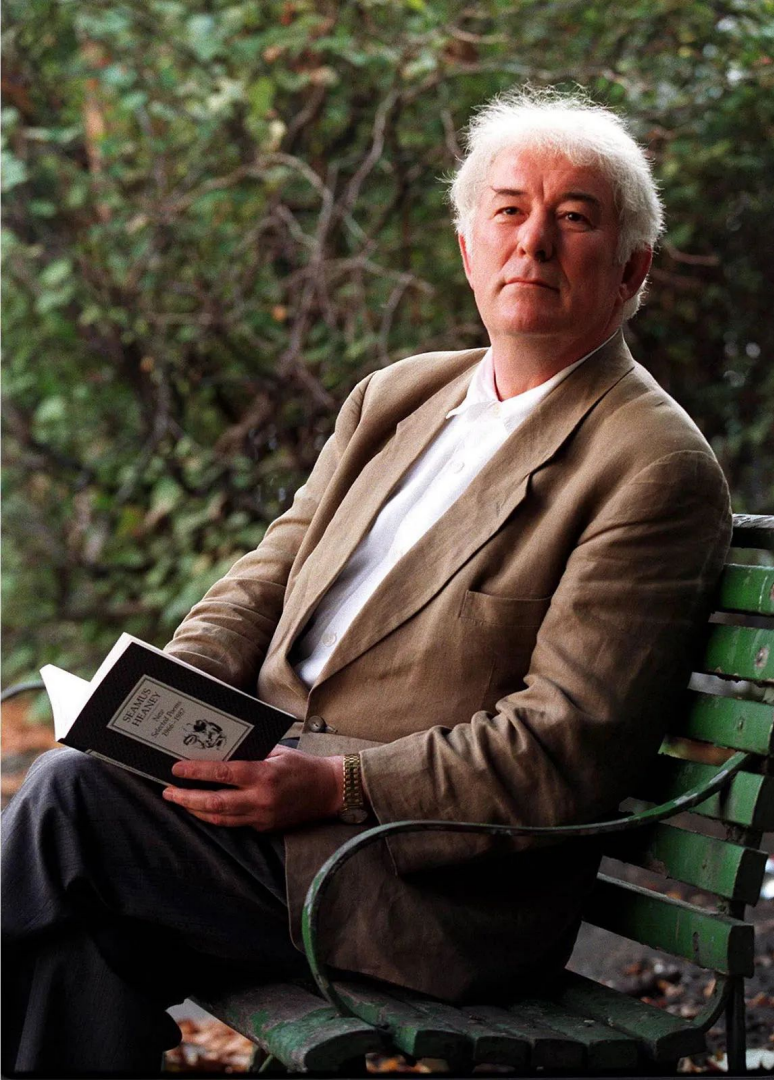


# “Solar”

Suspended lion face  
Spilling at the centre  
Of an unfurnished sky  
How still you stand,  
And how unaided  
Single stalkless flower  
You pour unrecompensed.

The eye sees you  
Simplified by distance  
Into an origin,  
Your petalled head of flames  
Continuously exploding.  
Heat is the echo of your  
Gold.

Coined there among  
Lonely horizontals  
You exist openly.  
Our needs hourly  
Climb and return like angels.  
Unclosing like a hand,  
You give for ever.



# Seamus Heaney

*The Death of a Naturalist* (1966)

*North* (1975)

*The Spirit Level* (1996)