There Will Come Soft Rains

Sara Teasdale

There will come soft rains and the smell of the ground,  
And swallows circling with their shimmering sound;  

And frogs in the pools singing at night,  
And wild plum-trees in tremulous white;  

Robins will wear their feathery fire  
Whistling their whims on a low fence-wire.  

And not one will know of the war, not one  
Will care at last when it is done.  

Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree,  
If mankind perished utterly;  

And Spring herself, when she woke at dawn,  
Would scarcely know that we were gone.

In a Restaurant

Sara Teasdale

The darkened street was muffled with the snow,  
The falling flakes had made your shoulders white,  
And when we found a shelter from the night  
Its glamor fell upon us like a blow.  
The clash of dishes and the viol and bow  
Mingled beneath the fever of the light.  
The heat was full of savors, and the bright  
Laughter of women lured the wine to flow.  
A little child ate nothing while she sat  
Watching a woman at a table there  
Learn to kiss beneath a drooping hat.  
The hour went by, we rose and turned to go,  
The somber street received us from the glare,  
And once more on your shoulders fell the snow.
My Papa’s Waltz
Theodore Roethke (1948)

The whiskey on your breath
Could make a small boy dizzy;
But I hung on like death:
Such waltzing was not easy.

We romped until the pans
Slid from the kitchen shelf;
My mother's countenance
Could not unfrown itself.

The hand that held my wrist
Was battered on one knuckle;
At every step you missed
My right ear scraped a buckle.

You beat time on my head
With a palm caked hard by dirt,
Then waltzed me off to bed
Still clinging to your shirt.
Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers
by Adrienne Rich (1951)

Aunt Jennifer’s tigers prance across a screen,
Bright topaz denizens in a world of green.
They do not fear the men beneath the tree;
They pace in sleek chivalric certainty.
Aunt Jennifer’s fingers fluttering through her wool
Find even the ivory needle hard to pull.
The massive weight of Uncle’s wedding band
Sits heavily upon Aunt Jennifer’s hand.
When Aunt is dead, her terrified hands will lie
Still ringed with ordeals she was mastered by.
The tigers in the panel that she made
Will go on prancing, proud and unafraid.
Believe me, if all those endearing young charms,
Which I gaze on so fondly to-day
Were to change by to-morrow, and fleet in my arms,
Like fairy-gifts fading away,
Thou wouldst still be adored, as this moment thou art,
Let thy loveliness fade as it will,
And around the dear ruin each wish of my heart
Would entwine itself verdantly still.

It is not while beauty and youth are thine own,
And thy cheeks unprofaned by a tear,
That the fervor and faith of a soul can be known,
To which time will but make thee more dear;
No, the heart that has truly loved never forgets,
But as truly loves on to the close,
As the sun-flower turns on her god, when he sets,
The same look which she turned when he rose.
Annabel Lee
Edgar Alan Poe

It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of ANNABEL LEE;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and she was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea;
But we loved with a love that was more than love-
I and my Annabel Lee;
With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
My beautiful Annabel Lee;
So that her highborn kinsman came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
Went envying her and me-
Yes!- that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we-
Of many far wiser than we-
And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling- my darling- my life and my bride,
In the sepulchre there by the sea,
In her tomb by the sounding sea.