

College Guild  
P.O. Box 6448, Brunswick, ME 04011

# POETRY CLUB

## Unit 2 of 7

As with Unit 1, you will be writing 4 poems, including 3 with specific guidelines relating to the poems presented in the Appendices; remember, only one of them rhyming. And, as in Unit 1, you'll be critiquing 3 other poems in depth. Remember also that this course is about reading and studying, not just writing, poetry.

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- 1. Write an original poem on the subject of your choosing.
- 2. Refer back to the list of considerations in the introduction to Unit 1. Using this list, fully critique the poem in Appendix B, "*Prison Daydreams of a Mother*," by Dolores Hornick.
- 3. Write a poem on family, family members, or ancestors.
- 4. Critique the poem in Appendix C, "*The Horror Writer*," by Tim A.
- 5. Write a poem on a child's feelings or memories about being in an attic, barn, school, car, or kitchen.

Read the poem "*Human Family*" by Maya Angelou in Appendix D. Maya Angelou, one of the most well known poets in America today, writes about the lives of African Americans, and in particular women. Her talents go far beyond poetry. She is also a producer, screen play writer, and actor. She has been appointed to organization leadership positions by Jimmy Carter, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Gerald Ford.

- 6. Discuss this poem as you did Sandburg's in Unit 1 (message, impact, what makes it unique, etc.)
- 7. Write a poem about another country, planet Earth, or another planet.
- 8. What have you learned from any, or all three, of the poems you have read in this unit that you can apply to your own work? Be specific, and provide (an) example(s).

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*Remember: First names only & please let us know if your address changes*



## APPENDIX D

*Human Family*

I note the obvious differences  
in the human family.  
Some of us are serious,  
some thrive on comedy.

Some declare their lives are lived  
as true profundity,  
and others claim they really live  
the real reality.

The variety of our skin tones  
can confuse, bemuse, delight,  
brown and pink and beige and purple,  
tan and blue and white.

I know ten thousand women  
called Jane and Mary Jane,  
but I've not seen any two  
who really were the same.

Mirror twins are different  
although their features jibe,  
and lovers think quite different thoughts  
while lying side by side.

We love and lose in China,  
we weep on England's moors,  
and laugh and moan in Guinea,  
and thrive on Spanish shores.

We seek success in Finland,  
are born and die in Maine.  
In minor ways we differ,  
in major we're the same

I note the obvious differences  
between each sort and type,  
but we are more alike, my friends,  
than we are unlike.

We are more alike, my friends,  
than we are unlike.

We are more alike, my friends,  
than we are unlike.

*Maya Angelou*

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A selection of works by other women poets:

- A sonnet (14 line poem with rhymes arranged in a fixed scheme) by Edna St. Vincent Millay, untitled.
- *If I Can Stop One Heart from Breaking*, and *I'm Nobody! Who Are You?*, by Emily Dickinson
- *The Whale*, by Carmen Bernos de Gasztold, translated by Rumer Godden (from *The Creatures' Choir*, a book of prayers by different animals.)

*Untitled*

What my lips have kissed, and where, and why  
 I have forgotten, and what arms have lain  
 Under my head till morning; but the rain  
 Is full of ghosts tonight, that tap and sigh  
 Upon the glass and listen for reply,  
 And in my heart there stirs quite a pain  
 For unremembered lads that not again  
 Will turn to me at midnight with a cry.  
 Thus in the winter stands the lonely tree,  
 Nor knows what birds have vanished one by one,  
 Yet knows it boughs more silent than before:  
 I cannot say what loves have come and gone,  
 I only know that summer sang in me  
 A little while, that sings no more.

*If I Can Stop One Heart from Breaking*

If I can stop one heart from breaking,  
 I shall not live in vain,  
 If I can ease one life the aching,  
 Or cool one pain,  
 Or help one fainting robin  
 Unto his nest again,  
 I shall not live in vain.

*I'm Nobody! Who Are You?*

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!

*The Whale*

What could hold me,  
 Lord,  
 except Your ocean?  
 My inordinate size  
 must obviously be  
 a divine joke,  
 but am I  
 perhaps  
 rather ridiculous,  
 like a blown-up rubber toy?  
 I am a peaceful leviathan,  
 on a strict diet,  
 a waterspout  
 on my nose.  
 My sole problem  
 is to choose between water and air;

but,  
 hunted for my mollifying oil,  
 I dread the whalers  
 who mercilessly chase me  
 with their iron harpoons.  
 I never asked  
 for such yards of flesh,  
 and where can I hide  
 from the lust of men?  
 Lord,  
 if only some fortunate plunge  
 would let me come up into  
 Your eternal peace.

Amen.