

# *Soul-Stirrers\**

A collection of beautiful poems

- N. Martis

\* The title in no way supports the existence of a metaphysical entity known as the 'soul'. By soul I mean the aggregate of human emotions and experiences, and the resultant prides and prejudices.

A poem begins as a lump in the throat, a sense of wrong, a  
homesickness, a lovesickness.

- Robert Frost

If you cannot be the poet, be the poem.

- David Carradine

# If

Rudyard Kipling

If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too;  
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,  
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;  
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim;  
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster  
And treat those two impostors just the same;  
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken  
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,  
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,  
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings  
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,  
And lose, and start again at your beginnings

And never breathe a word about your loss;  
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew  
To serve your turn long after they are gone,  
And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,  
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,  
If all men count with you, but none too much;  
If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

## air and light and time and space

Charles Bukowski

"—you know, I've either had a family, a job,  
something has always been in the  
way  
but now  
I've sold my house, I've found this  
place, a large studio, you should see the space and  
the light.  
for the first time in my life I'm going to have  
a place and the time to  
create."

no baby, if you're going to create  
you're going to create whether you work  
16 hours a day in a coal mine  
or  
you're going to create in a small room with 3 children  
while you're on  
welfare,  
you're going to create with part of your mind and your body blown  
away,  
you're going to create blind  
crippled  
demented,

you're going to create with a cat crawling up your  
back while  
the whole city trembles in earthquake, bombardment,  
flood and fire.

baby, air and light and time and space  
have nothing to do with it  
and don't create anything  
except maybe a longer life to find  
new excuses  
for.

## **Invictus**

William Ernest Henley

Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll.

I am the master of my fate:  
I am the captain of my soul.

## **O Me! O Life!**

By Walt Whitman

Oh me! Oh life! of the questions of these recurring,  
Of the endless trains of the faithless, of cities fill'd with the foolish,  
Of myself forever reproaching myself, (for who more foolish than I, and who more faithless?)  
Of eyes that vainly crave the light, of the objects mean, of the struggle ever renew'd,  
Of the poor results of all, of the plodding and sordid crowds I see around me,  
Of the empty and useless years of the rest, with the rest me intertwined,  
The question, O me! so sad, recurring—What good amid these, O me, O life?

Answer.

That you are here—that life exists and identity,  
That the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse.



## **Roll the Dice**

Charles Bukowski

if you're going to try, go all the  
way.

otherwise, don't even start.

if you're going to try, go all the  
way.

this could mean losing girlfriends,  
wives, relatives, jobs and  
maybe your mind.

go all the way.

it could mean not eating for 3 or 4 days.

it could mean freezing on a  
park bench.

it could mean jail,

it could mean derision,

mockery,

isolation.

isolation is the gift,

all the others are a test of your  
endurance, of

how much you really want to  
do it.  
and you'll do it  
despite rejection and the worst odds  
and it will be better than  
anything else  
you can imagine.

if you're going to try,  
go all the way.  
there is no other feeling like  
that.  
you will be alone with the gods  
and the nights will flame with  
fire.

do it, do it, do it.  
do it.

all the way  
all the way.

you will ride life straight to  
perfect laughter, its

the only good fight

there is.

## **Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening**

Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know.

His house is in the village though;

He will not see me stopping here

To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer

To stop without a farmhouse near

Between the woods and frozen lake

The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake

To ask if there is some mistake.

The only other sound's the sweep

Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,

But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep,

And miles to go before I sleep.