

Annie Finch Lectures

THE POWER OF METER AND THE METER OF FIRE (ANAPESTS)

Sample Poems

Annie Finch

KETTLE COVE

Through the upper and lower worlds, body and soul,  
Through your softness and hardness, your wetness and  
roil,  
May I rock in your mystery, speaking and whole,  
Like the rockweeds You rock in your undersea coil!

*You are fire in the rock and the water and wind,  
in the earth and the sun and the ocean and air.*

Like the rockweeds You rock in your undersea coil,  
Half way between water and earth, I divide.

May I rock in your mystery, speaking and whole —  
On your softness and hardness and wildness I ride!

In the center of sunlight, I am coming true!  
In the pulling of ripples, I'm there!  
I will answer your heart with me, my heart with You,  
In this balance of waiting and air.

*I am fire in the rock and the water and wind,  
and the earth and the sun and the ocean and air.*

On the point of the spray and the push of the tide,  
I have rocked in your mystery, speaking and whole!  
On your softness and hardness and wildness I ride  
Like the rockweeds You rock, in your undersea coil!

Algernon Charles Swinburne

#### A SONG OF REVOLUTION

The heart of the rulers is sick, and the high-priest covers his head:  
For this is the song of the quick that is heard in the ears of the dead.

The poor and the halt and the blind are keen and mighty and fleet:

Like the noise of the blowing of wind is the sound of the noise of their feet.

The wind has the sound of a laugh in the clamour of days and of deeds:

The priests are scattered like chaff, and the rulers broken like reeds.

The high-priest sick from qualms, with his raiment bloodily dashed;

The thief with branded palms, and the liar with cheeks abashed.

They are smitten, they tremble greatly, they are pained for their pleasant things:

For the house of the priests made stately, and the might in the mouth of the kings.

They are grieved and greatly afraid; they are taken, they shall not flee:

For the heart of the nations is made as the strength of the springs of the sea.

They were fair in the grace of gold, they walked with delicate feet:

They were clothed with the cunning of old, and the smell of their garments was sweet.

For the breaking of gold in their hair they halt as a man made lame:

They are utterly naked and bare; their mouths are bitter with shame.

Wilt thou judge thy people now, O king that wast found most wise?

Wilt thou lie any more, O thou whose mouth is emptied of lies?

Shall God make a pact with thee, till his hook be found in thy sides?

Wilt thou put back the time of the sea, or the place of the season of tides?

Set a word in thy lips, to stand before God with a word in thy mouth;

That "the rain shall return in the land, and the tender dew after drouth."

But the arm of the elders is broken, their strength is unbound and undone:

They wait for a sign of a token; they cry, and there cometh none.

Their moan is in every place, the cry of them filleth the land:

There is shame in the sight of their face, there is fear in the thews of their hand.

They are girdled about the reins with a curse for the girdle thereon:

For the noise of the rending of chains the face of their colour is gone.

For the sound of the shouting of men they are grievously stricken at heart:

They are smitten asunder with pain, their bones are smitten apart.

There is none of them all that is whole; their lips gape open for breath;

They are clothed with sickness of soul, and the shape of the shadow of death.

The wind is thwart in their feet; it is full of the shouting of mirth;

As one shaketh the sides of a sheet, so it shaketh the ends of the earth.

The sword, the sword is made keen; the iron has opened its mouth;

The corn is red that was green; it is bound for the sheaves of the south.

The sound of a word was shed, the sound of the wind as a breath,

In the ears of the souls that were dead, in the dust of the deepness of death;

Where the face of the moon is taken, the ways of the stars undone,  
The light of the whole sky shaken, the light of the face of the sun:

Where the waters are emptied and broken, the waves of the waters are stayed;  
Where God has bound for a token the darkness that maketh afraid;

Where the sword was covered and hidden, and dust had grown in its side,  
A word came forth which was bidden, the crying of one that cried:

The sides of the two-edged sword shall be bare, and its mouth shall be red,  
For the breath of the face of the Lord that is felt in the bones of the dead.

Sara Teasdale

I WOULD LOVE IN YOUR LOVE

I would live in your love as the sea-grasses live in the sea,  
Borne up by each wave as it passes, drawn down by each wave that recedes;  
I would empty my soul of the dreams that have gathered in me,  
I would beat with your heart as it beats, I would follow your soul as it leads.

George Gordon, Lord Byron

## THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,  
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;  
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,  
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,  
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:  
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,  
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,  
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;  
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,  
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still!

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,  
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;  
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,  
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,  
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail:  
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,  
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,  
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;  
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,  
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

Edgar Allen Poe

ANNABEL LEE

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 wingèd 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 kinsmen 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 her sepulchre there by the sea—

In her tomb by the sounding sea.

=

*Annie Finch*

*GODDESS RIDING THE SUN*

*For Adrienne Rich*

As the Mother — like flame —takes life back,

We are changed! Flame is all that She has,

Rising up from the coals to the sky;

She is here! Where She glows on the same,

We are changed! Flame is all that She has,

Since she gave up her land once. We call;

She is here! And She glows on the same,

Rising up from the coals, to the sky,

Since she gave up her land, once. We call

Past the embers She's leaving to stay,

Rising up from the coals, to the sky,

Breathing green-yellow hope through the night.

Past the embers, She's leaving to stay,

To return as a creature again —

Breathing green-yellow hope through the night

As we lie with our softer new hearts.

She returns, as a creature again —

She has welcomed the Sun for her crown

And we lie with our softer new hearts,

Where Her body remembers the trees.

Goddess Riding the Sun! Come to be

As our Mother — like flame —takes life back,

Where Your body remembers the trees

Rising up from the coals to the sky!