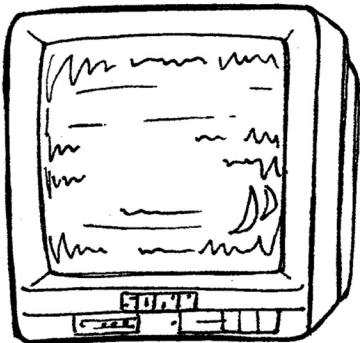


Saturday Morning Poetry:  
An Anthology of Poems  
Inspired by Cartoons &  
Anime

Edited by Anthony David  
Vernon



Winter A. Chen

Inspired by Pokémon

778. Mimikyu

“After going to all the effort of disguising itself, its neck was broken. Whatever is inside is probably unharmed, but it’s still feeling sad.” – Pokémon Sun

You are still trying to name yourself, still scribbling on your tombstones, still threading through sutures. You are partition & parenthesis. You are still trying to remember your myths, untangling knots of flesh & fate. You are folklore & family curse. You self-exorcist.

When a man touches you, does he see a twinkling pixie, or a meat mannequin? What colour does he see in your irises? Whose voice does he hear? Which cheekbone catches the light? Will his impish smile lead to nowhere? Will his fascination fade at sunrise, like every other boy before him? Or will he want to store you in a jar? When the crypt of your neck cracks, will he flee from the mogwais within? What does he want from you? Your ghost-parts, your fairy-parts, or the parts that are neither?

The mirror stares back every day. You don’t know what shade you’re looking at. You don’t know how skin feels like. Only silk. Only chiffon. You don’t know how a man’s tongue tastes like. Does it lick like lace? You pull at the seams of your parts. You don’t know which part needs a cross-stitch. Maybe you need a lock of hair. Maybe you need the spell of someone else’s fingers. Maybe you’re fine with not knowing.

Trevor Ketner

Inspired by Cowboy Bebop

“Waltz for Venus: An Elegy”

Spores drift from green islands, gray eyes with ash —  
he gets a cigar burn blessing right in the third eye  
where for some, before, was a cross if not this  
Wednesday then the next or the next or the last.

When one walks past a row of columns  
one begins with six, splices to one, slides  
back to six, columns being, then, two  
kinds of circle — holding shape, enacting it.

Don't tense up. He'll still die,  
drop the plant he's holding, catch the bullet.  
Fluid like water. Don't die! Don't die!  
And still he will die leaving tinny music

some full flowers, some money to mend you.  
Why hasn't he come to see me?  
You reach for the fact of a watery face.  
He's dead. I see. I never saw him—

and the sky will go on blinding some and not  
others, healing with the same hand that harms.  
No one knows why what hangs over the world  
makes it worth living in or opens you like a music box.

Anthony David Vernon

Inspired by Adventure Time

The Wedding of the Flame Princess

Finn, I can't go on with this

If only my fire could be served in sips

Just a flame is nice to hold

But I'm a series of suns that swarm

Brittany Schuneman

Inspired by Superwoman

Trial by Devotion

The man who entered my life was not who I thought he was  
He would come to be my salvation as easily as my end  
He was bewitching and alluring as he brought me into his arms  
At the end of the day our lives were turned around, entwined

The woman who walked away believed she was superwoman  
Supposed to be my salvation, instead leaving splinters and shards  
Her tenacity drew me into the whirlwind of her existence  
She suddenly had chosen retreat, falling back into herself

The man who entered my life brought betrayal and regret  
My own feelings deceived me, glamouring love as lust  
Yet he walked away as if our time meant nothing, I was nothing  
Only to find himself on his knees, pleading for a retrial

She who walked away brought new beginnings and freedom  
My own prerogative suddenly was my right, liberation knocking  
She returned to her own refuge, discarding in the barren  
The numbing cold pierced through me, making me unyielding

Terra Patrick

Inspired by Bojack Horseman

tearing up the floorboards

“i wanna be an architect.”

i want to build, it's time to grow; i am

too old to keep playing games of

pretend, kicking strangers from my bed. since i could

speak, the words i've said have not been

mine; decades enough life i've lived out another

hand's design. i am familiar with the tastes of

vomit and rejection, always in my spit. i'll stay young on the

screen and search, in secret, for something to

grow old with – let me find

distraction from the grieving of lost years and

come-true fears. all they say of this scene is the truth. but,

drunk, i think, maybe

i can change, now, with all this scar tissue

between me and my youth - every healing wound is

proof that i survived, or tried. i want

an escape from the thoughts, to burn down

my old haunts. if i'm to be a ghost, i will build

my own graveyard, and find bodies like mine

to fill the spaces. but all

my hope has splintered; i am the tide on the shore at night, reflecting the sky: washed

up, but still a star.

Athena Maynard & Anthony David Vernon

Inspired by Grossology

Unfortunate Breath

Of course I'm scared of the fire

Cause I only breathe gasoline

Freaks them all the way out.

I'm the weirdest thing they've all seen

And I love it.

Prerna Sinha  
Inspired by Hell Girl

Your Grievance Shall be Avenged

“As someone wrote, and I quote,  
People who weren’t condemned to hell  
For their actions weren’t as brutish shall perish as well.  
A trifling evil eventually swells,  
Suffering pain and torment, and still, no one hears your yell.  
Trying your best, but you’re unable to quell,  
Lost in the abyss, praying to Uriel.  
Save me now, save me before I repel,  
Before it’s too late and there’s nothing left to tell.  
And as deeper and deeper I fell,  
I realized there was no more saving from myself.”



Brittany Schuneman

Inspired by Winx

Serpents of Ideal

Oh to be freed from the idea of perfection  
The lasso of expectation pulling you back  
The poison slithers its way through your veins,  
Hands poised, but frozen  
Why does their steps in the hallway  
Send ice-cold fear shooting through my fingertips  
Is the pain, throbbing through my fingertips,  
Simply a reminder of the failures I have experienced  
The snake of depression coiling around my stomach

Oh to be freed from the idea of perfection  
The noose of expectation choking you back  
The droplets of blood slipping down across your body  
Hands frozen, bleeding and torn from the rope  
Why do their steps in the hallway  
Never stop, never pause, never check  
Yet the fear can be felt, pulsating harsh in my fingers  
The unimportance forcing itself like a gag into my throat  
And the viper's venom burns through my veins

Oh to be freed from the prison of perfection  
That binding of codependence muffling my voice  
The tears and sweat from hours of screaming,  
Eyes bloodshot and cheeks soaked with regret  
Why do those damned footsteps in the hallway  
Stomp past and slam the other doors open and closed  
That fear pulsing through each fiber of my being  
Agony constricting my airway, forcing me to choke  
And the asp of despondency sleeping deep in my heart

Muichiro-Sunglasses & Anthony David Vernon

Inspired by Demon Slayer

九柱の歌 (Nine Hashira)

Once alive

[A] flame ablaze fades away like a flower

The small butterfly soon flutters goodbye

The mist clears, inhaled, and exhaled quietly

The wind remains but his brother passed away

The strong snake slithers away as he hides

The majestic rock has finally broke

The quiet water finally spoke

His brother passed away

Terra Patrick

Inspired by Bojack Horseman

i don't know who i was, yesterday

tell my mama, i'm driving home and i hope she won't be there. i'm smelling gasoline and eating loose pills from my purse – i lost my dreams in my luggage crossing a boundary off screen, and now i'm checking days off the calendar like i recognise midnight from noon or tuesday from friday.

i sleep better in beds that aren't mine. you are dreaming awake, hands on the sheets like knotted silk. you are tasting the air with your tongue like a snake and it's leftover cocktail garnishes, fading smoke, sickly sweet. i taste your cheek, the salty rim of your eyelid, like a sip could quench me; like you will fill me, like you are big enough to fit the empty. you are cheap curtains hung over a boarded-up window, but your eyes are to the sky, so you imagine velvet, and a castle.

i will not correct you; i'll buy my presence with silence and choreographed confessions. the shape of a lie is soft and comforting, easy to hold – my body is soft and comforting, easy to hold. i see no difference and feed you both; i feed the world both, like i have been taught. pretend is second skin and second nature when i've spent most of my years not recognising myself. and there is no asking for help when the sickness runs this deep.

i am cut scenes and auditions without callbacks, and there's a world out there that i missed. i'd steal the sign to my city but someone beat me to it. i beat them to the last drops in the bottle instead and i laugh. i cope with winter noses and farm-yard veins; i've been begging my brains to heal but i never give them a shot. i am more what than who.

sometimes my skin harbours an imposter: sometimes she is a con artist, others a lost child who never grew. i don't wear lipstick because i chew my lips like bubble gum. i wear mascara so that everyone knows when i cry, even if it's silent. the air outside tastes like cigarette smoke to a

recovering addict, like regret and resent and overbearing desperation. i'm sure my lungs aren't pink, anymore, but i don't know what colour my eyes are when i close them.

Trevor Ketner

Inspired by Cowboy Bebop

“Ode to the Two Men Having Sex in ‘Waltz for Venus’”

One of you hung carefully your jacket over the bed  
after entering the room — relaxing, neatly, as if by habit,  
into nakedness. When she came in, gun out,

someone lost money or love. If Venus doesn't have Grindr  
I like to think this was one part of each day you could be,  
more or less, yourselves, glowing together in that galactic room.

She sticks the gun in your mouth; you try to say you can't  
breathe. Like the guy you're with hasn't heard that before.  
If the yellow sky hasn't blinded you yet and you've kept that man

in bed all this time, years I hope, you can breathe with anything  
down your throat, honey. We've both sucked dick. I know you  
know what you're doing, not even jumping when she came in.

I hope you both grew old together after this, after finally  
spending the rest of that afternoon together, eating dinner,  
holding hands as you walk the edge of one of the floating islands

that made it possible to live there on that planet built  
for just such a series of moments, named so much for you —  
air plant in my window now, may Venus be kinder than here.

**Winter A. Chen** is a poet, performer, and artist based in London. She holds a MA in Poetic Practice from Royal Holloway, University of London. She was a '22 Lambda Literary Poetry Fellow. Her works have appeared in *Stellium*, *Strange Horizons*, *EnbyLife*, *beestung*, *justfemme* and *dandy* amongst others.

**Trevor Ketner** is a poet and educator. They are the author of *The Wild Hunt Divinations: A Grimoire* (Wesleyan University Press) and *[WHITE]* (University of Georgia Press), winner of the National Poetry Series.

**Athena Maynard** lives in NYC. She is a singer and poet at heart! She loves to spend time out and about in the city and takes inspiration from the things that are closest to her in life. Part of the LGBTQ community and absolutely loves the stars and cats.

**Terra Patrick** is a Canadian writer with a particular love for dark fiction. She's written dozens of short stories in various genres, and is currently working on her debut horror novel. While her published works may be fiction, Terra isn't limited in what she writes. She has projects ranging from poetry to screenplays to essays to articles. Terra is also a freelance copywriter and editor based in Alberta, Canada.

**Brittany Schuneman** completed a Bachelor's in English with a Creative Writing focus at Southwestern Oklahoma State University. She currently attends Oklahoma State University enrolled in their English Master's program studying Writing and Rhetoric.

**Perna Sinha** is writing blogs about her life.

**Muichiro-Sunglasses** if you aren't me or Swills what're you doing here? Also, I'm the Tokito Twins' #1 stan since early 2019.

**Anthony David Vernon** is a Cuban-American literary writer who earned his Master's degree in philosophy at the University of New Mexico. He is a regularly published author of poetry along with short stories and philosophical articles in various outlets. His premiere book is *The Assumption of Death* (Alien Buddha Press) a hybrid work of poetry, short stories, and philosophical musings. His second book is entitled *Flings on Flings* (gnOme Books). He received a Pushcart nomination for his essay *Guilt Is A Pleasure*.