

## **My Papa's Waltz**

Theodore Roethke

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.

## **Success Is Counted Sweetest**

Emily Dickinson

Success is counted sweetest  
By those who ne'er succeed.  
To comprehend a nectar  
Requires sorest need.

Not one of all the purple Host  
Who took the Flag today  
Can tell the definition  
So clear of Victory

As he defeated—dying—  
On whose forbidden ear  
The distant strains of triumph  
Burst agonized and clear!

## **Sonnet 18**

William Shakespeare

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.  
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimmed;  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,  
Nor shall Death brag thou wand'rest in his shade  
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st.  
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

## **Death Be not Proud**

John Donne

Death be not proud, though some have called thee  
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;  
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow  
Die not, poor death, nor yet canst thou kill me.  
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,  
Much pleasure, then from thee much more must flow,  
And soonest our best men with thee do go,  
Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.  
Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,  
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,  
And poppy, or charms can make us sleep as well,  
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?  
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,  
And death shall be no more; death, thou shalt die.