**‘Out, Out—’**By [Robert Frost](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/robert-frost)

The buzz saw snarled and rattled in the yard

And made dust and dropped stove-length sticks of wood,

Sweet-scented stuff when the breeze drew across it.

And from there those that lifted eyes could count

Five mountain ranges one behind the other

Under the sunset far into Vermont.

And the saw snarled and rattled, snarled and rattled,

As it ran light, or had to bear a load.

And nothing happened: day was all but done.

Call it a day, I wish they might have said

To please the boy by giving him the half hour

That a boy counts so much when saved from work.

His sister stood beside him in her apron

To tell them ‘Supper.’ At the word, the saw,

As if to prove saws know what supper meant,

Leaped out at the boy’s hand, or seemed to leap—

He must have given the hand. However it was,

Neither refused the meeting. But the hand!

The boy’s first outcry was a rueful laugh,

As he swung toward them holding up the hand

Half in appeal, but half as if to keep

The life from spilling. Then the boy saw all—

Since he was old enough to know, big boy

Doing a man’s work, though a child at heart—

He saw all was spoiled. ‘Don’t let him cut my hand off—

The doctor, when he comes. Don’t let him, sister!’

So. But the hand was gone already.

The doctor put him in the dark of ether.

He lay and puffed his lips out with his breath.

And then—the watcher at his pulse took fright.

No one believed. They listened to his heart.

Little—less—nothing!—and that ended it.

No more to build on there. And they, since they

Were not the one dead, turned to their affairs.

*“Did I Miss Anything” – Tom Wayman*

*Question frequently asked by  
students after missing a class*  
  
Nothing. When we realized you weren't here  
we sat with our hands folded on our desks  
in silence, for the full two hours  
  
        Everything. I gave an exam worth  
        40 per cent of the grade for this term  
        and assigned some reading due today  
        on which I'm about to hand out a quiz  
        worth 50 per cent  
  
Nothing. None of the content of this course  
has value or meaning  
Take as many days off as you like:  
any activities we undertake as a class  
I assure you will not matter either to you or me  
and are without purpose  
  
        Everything. A few minutes after we began last time  
        a shaft of light descended and an angel  
        or other heavenly being appeared  
        and revealed to us what each woman or man must do  
        to attain divine wisdom in this life and  
        the hereafter  
        This is the last time the class will meet  
        before we disperse to bring this good news to all people  
                on earth  
  
Nothing. When you are not present  
how could something significant occur?  
  
        Everything. Contained in this classroom  
        is a microcosm of human existence  
        assembled for you to query and examine and ponder  
        This is not the only place such an opportunity has been  
                gathered  
  
        but it was one place  
  
        And you weren't here

“If” by 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!

*“No One Clapped” – Marcie Hans*

*Fueled  
by a million  
man-made   
wings of fire --  
the rocket tore a tunnel  
through the sky --  
and everybody cheered.*

*Fueled  
only by a thought from God --  
the seedling  
urged its way  
through the thickness of black --  
and as it pierced  
the heavy ceiling of the soil ...  
and launched itself  
up into outer space  
no one even clapped.*

“Students” by Tom Wayman  
  
The freshman class-list printouts  
showed birthdates so recent  
Wayman was sure the computer was in error.  
One young man, however, was curious  
about Wayman's mention near the start of term  
of his old college newspaper:  
"You were an editor when? Wow,  
that's the year I was born."  
The wisdom of the students  
hadn't altered, though.  
Wayman observed many clung to  
The Vaccination Theory of Education  
he remembered: once you have had a subject  
you are immune  
and never have to consider it again.  
Other students continue to endorse  
The Dipstick Theory of Education:  
as with a car engine, where as long as the oil level  
is above the add line  
there is no need to put in more oil,  
so if you receive a pass or higher  
why put any more into learning?  
  
At the front of the room, Wayman sweated  
to reveal his alternative.  
"Adopt The Kung Fu Theory of Education,"  
he begged.  
"Learning as self-defence. The more you understand  
about what's occurring around you  
the better prepared you are to deal with difficulties."  
  
The students remained skeptical.  
A young woman was a pioneer  
of The Easy Listening Theory of Learning:  
spending her hours in class  
with her tape recorder earphones on,  
silently enjoying a pleasanter world.  
"Don't worry, I can hear you,"  
she reassured Wayman  
when after some days he was move to inquire.  
  
Finally, at terms' end  
Wayman inscribed after each now-familiar name on the list  
the traditional single letter.  
And whatever pedagogical approach  
he or the students espouse,  
Wayman knew this notation would be pored over  
with more intensity  
than anything else Wayman taught.

“Crossing the Bar” – Alfred Lord Tennyson

Sunset and evening star,  
  And one clear call for me!  
And may there be no moaning of the bar,  
  When I put out to sea,  
  
But such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
    Too full for sound and foam,  
When that which drew from out the boundless deep  
    Turns again home.  
  
Twilight and evening bell,  
And after that the dark!  
And may there be no sadness of farewell,  
    When I embark;  
  
For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place  
    The flood may bear me far,  
I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
    When I have crost the bar.

## Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night – Dylan Thomas

Do not go gentle into that good night,  
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.  
  
Though wise men at their end know dark is right,  
Because their words had forked no lightning they  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
  
Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright  
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.  
  
Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,  
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
  
Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight  
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.  
  
And you, my father, there on that sad height,  
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

“The Child Who Walks Backwards” – Lorna Crozier

My next-door neighbour tells me  
her child runs into things.  
Cupboard corners and doorknobs  
have pounded their shapes  
into his face. She says  
he is bothered by dreams,  
rises in sleep from his bed  
to steal through the halls  
and plummet like a wounded bird  
down the flight of stairs.  
  
This child who climbed my maple  
with the sureness of a cat,  
trips in his room, cracks  
his skull on the bedpost,  
smacks his cheeks on the floor.  
When I ask about the burns  
on the back of his knee,  
his mother tells me  
he walks backwards  
into fireplace grates  
or sits and stares at flames  
while sparks burn stars in his skin.  
  
Other children write their names  
on the casts that hold  
his small bones.  
His mother tells me  
he runs into things,  
walks backwards,  
breaks his leg  
while she lies  
sleeping.

“Because I could not stop for Death” – Emily Dickinson

Because I could not stop for Death,  
He kindly stopped for me;  
The carriage held but just ourselves  
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,   
And I had put away  
My labor, and my leisure too,  
For his civility.

We passed the school, where children strove  
At recess, in the ring;  
We passed the fields of gazing grain,  
We passed the setting sun.

Or rather, he passed us;  
The dews grew quivering and chill,  
For only gossamer my gown,  
My tippet only tulle.

We paused before a house that seemed  
A swelling of the ground;  
The roof was scarcely visible,  
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries, and yet each  
Feels shorter than the day  
I first surmised the horses' heads  
Were toward eternity