

Thirty-Five (inspired by Sonnet 11) by Jackie Kay

As quick as you fell ill, quickly you recover;
 A quip returned, a memory uncovered.
 Saline drip, subcut, a new route discovered.
 You slip into the railed bed, slide under covers.
 Outside Glasgow Royal – snow – a thin sheet.
 Inside your wit, wisdom makes my heart swell –
 Bigger than your water-retaining feet.
 Without this love, nothing could ever be well.
 A gift the heart wrapped early in this life.
 The more you give the more you have to cherish.
 If I could offer you my veins, I'd gladly use a knife.
 At times it seems if you go, I too will perish.
 A mould broke made a new mother of you.
 Blood, water, sealed with a kiss: all true.

Library Lovers by Austin Macrae

“She devours Steel, and he L'Amour.
 She leads him to the fiction, where they part
 for different shelves. He's eager to explore
 the tough ol' west, and she the tough ol' heart.
 They meet me at the desk with separate piles.
 Unthinkingly, I mix the books together.
 I sense his wave of nervousness. She smiles
 and quickly sorts the titles out. 'Nice weather
 today,' she says. He slides his pile away,
 averts his eyes, and waits for her to pull
 out bags. 'Let's eat at Lou's,' I hear her say.
 She grabs his arm and leads him, tote bag full
 of cowboy stories swinging at his heel,
 his sidearm holstered by her whim of steel.”

**Lines Composed on April 23, 2016, on the 400th Anniversary of His Death
 Wilude Scabere.**

“Shall I compare his language to a grave?
 It is more lively and more flowery.
 His rough-shook words refuse to be death's slave.
 No tomb's as showy or so showery.
 A sepulchre, though hard as rock, erodes,
 and shrines do often lose their lustre's prime,
 while monuments, though nice, make poor abodes,

and sadly catacombs decay in time.
 But Shakespeare's language will not go away.
 Unceasingly, his lines play in the mind.
 They pop up even on a summer's day.
 Unlike a crypt, they will not stay behind.
 Alas, poor Oracle, his song goes on,
 despite all efforts of oblivion

Vermont by Phillip Whidden

“A white wood house defines the slope. The trees
 Have gone to red and flame. A field beyond
 Is spread with grass and granite rocks at ease.
 This stonewall pattern thinks it holds a pond.
 But it is free beneath October's sun,
 At least as free as anything can be
 In fever such as we all know when, done
 With heavy summer, eyes begin to see
 The chill of air and glaze themselves with dreams.
 Restrained. The farmhouse windows have their fire
 Inside as well. Twilight is more it seems,
 And maple facts can mesmerize desire.
 A white wood house defines the slope of hill
 Where people keep another autumn, still.”

November by Lorna Davis

“The golden days of late October fade
 As bleak November's iron skies descend.
 When tresses, like the leaden clouds, have greyed,
 We see our fruitful time's approaching end.
 The sunshine that besieged us with its heat
 Now leans against the south walls, cold and tired.
 There is no empire time will not defeat;
 Each Golden Age that flared has soon expired.
 Byzantium lies silent under steel,
 Persepolis has crumbled back to dust.
 Despite the wistful longing we might feel,
 All times of summer fade, as fade they must.
 Embrace what time remains; it will not last.
 Your autumn, too, will soon be ancient past.”