

## Examples of Poems that *Capture the Movement of One's Mind, Awareness, or Consciousness*

In the following three poems, notice how each author captures not only what happens "inside" the speaker's mind or consciousness, but also what happens "outside" the speaker—or in *the environment* surrounding the speaker.

### Elizabeth Bishop (1911-1979)

#### *Five Flights Up*

Still dark.  
The unknown bird sits on his usual branch.  
The little dog next door barks in his sleep  
inquiringly, just once.  
Perhaps in his sleep, too, the bird inquires  
once or twice, quavering.  
Questions—if that is what they are—  
answered directly, simply,  
by day itself.

Enormous morning, ponderous, meticulous;  
gray light streaking each bare branch,  
each single twig, along one side,  
making another tree, of glassy veins...  
The bird still sits there. Now he seems to yawn.

The little black dog runs in his yard.  
His owner's voice arises, stern,  
"You ought to be ashamed!"  
What has he done?  
He bounces cheerfully up and down;  
he rushes in circles in the fallen leaves.

Obviously, he has no sense of shame.  
He and the bird know everything is answered,  
all taken care of,  
no need to ask again.  
—Yesterday brought to today so lightly!  
(A yesterday I find almost impossible to lift.)

Note: Two more poems follow; go on to the next two pages.

**Gary Snyder (born 1930)**

***Piute Creek***

One granite ridge  
A tree, would be enough  
Or even a rock, a small creek,  
A bark shred in a pool.  
Hill beyond hill, folded and twisted  
Tough trees crammed  
In thin stone fractures  
A huge moon on it all, is too much.  
The mind wanders. A million  
Summers, night air still and the rocks  
Warm. Sky over endless mountains.  
All the junk that goes with being human  
Drops away, hard rock wavers  
Even the heavy present seems to fail  
This bubble of a heart.  
Words and books  
Like a small creek off a high ledge  
Gone in the dry air.

A clear, attentive mind  
Has no meaning but that  
Which sees is truly seen.  
No one loves rock, yet we are here.  
Night chills. A flick  
In the moonlight  
Slips into Juniper shadow:  
Back there unseen  
Cold proud eyes  
Of Cougar or Coyote  
Watch me rise and go.

Note: One more poem follows; go on to the next page.

In the following poem, notice how author William Stafford not only captures what happens "inside" his mind and what happens "outside" in the environment that surrounds him, but also captures what he experiences physically, in his body.

**William Stafford (1914-1993)**

***Five A.M.***

Still dark, the early morning breathes  
a soft sound above the fire. Hooded  
lights on porches lead past lawns,  
a hedge; I pass the house of the couple  
who have the baby, the yard with the little  
dog; my feet pad and grit on the pavement, flicker  
past streetlights; my arms alternate  
easily to my pace. Where are my troubles?

There are people in every country who never  
turn into killers, saints have built  
sanctuaries on islands and in valleys,  
conquerors have quit and gone home, for thousands  
of years farmers have worked their fields.  
My feet begin the uphill curve  
where a thicket spills with a birds every spring.  
The air doesn't stir. Rain touches my face.