

**Examples of poems that focus on an abstract quality, concept, or emotion and make this subject concrete and understandable to the reader through metaphor, personification, conceit, or imagery**

**Mark Strand (1934-2014)**

***Nostalgia***

The professors of English have taken their gowns  
to the laundry, have taken themselves to the fields.  
Dreams of motion circle the Persian rug in a room  
you were in.  
On the beach the sadness of gramophones  
deepens the ocean's folding and falling.  
It is yesterday. It is still yesterday.

**Amy Lowell (1874 – 1925)**

***Leisure***

Leisure, thou goddess of a bygone age,  
When hours were long and days sufficed to hold  
Wide-eyed delights and pleasures uncontrolled  
By shortening moments, when no gaunt presage  
Of undone duties, modern heritage,  
Haunted our happy minds; must thou withhold  
Thy presence from this over-busy world,  
And bearing silence with thee disengage  
Our twined fortunes? Deeps of unhewn woods  
Alone can cherish thee, alone possess  
Thy quiet, teeming vigor. This our crime:  
Not to have worshipped, marred by alien moods  
That sole condition of all loveliness,  
The dreaming lapse of slow, unmeasured time.

**Marie Ponsot 1921**

***Bliss and Grief***

No one  
is here  
right now.

**Jane Kenyon (1947 – 1995)**

***Happiness***

There's just no accounting for happiness,  
or the way it turns up like a prodigal  
who comes back to the dust at your feet  
having squandered a fortune far away.

And how can you not forgive?  
You make a feast in honor of what  
was lost, and take from its place the finest  
garment, which you saved for an occasion  
you could not imagine, and you weep night and day  
to know that you were not abandoned,  
that happiness saved its most extreme form  
for you alone.

No, happiness is the uncle you never  
knew about, who flies a single-engine plane  
onto the grassy landing strip, hitchhikes  
into town, and inquires at every door  
until he finds you asleep midafternoon  
as you so often are during the unmerciful  
hours of your despair.

It comes to the monk in his cell.  
It comes to the woman sweeping the street  
with a birch broom, to the child  
whose mother has passed out from drink.  
It comes to the lover, to the dog chewing  
a sock, to the pusher, to the basketmaker,  
and to the clerk stacking cans of carrots  
in the night.

It even comes to the boulder  
in the perpetual shade of pine barrens,  
to rain falling on the open sea,  
to the wineglass, weary of holding wine.

**Robinson Jeffers (1887-1962)**

***Wonder and Joy***

The things that one grows tired of—O, be sure  
They are only foolish artificial things!  
Can a bird ever tire of having wings?  
And I, so long as life and sense endure,  
(Or brief be they!) shall nevermore inure  
My heart to the recurrence of the springs,  
Of gray dawns, the gracious evenings,  
The infinite wheeling stars. A wonder pure  
Must ever well within me to behold  
Venus decline; or great Orion, whose belt

Is studded with three nails of burning gold,  
Ascend the winter heaven. Who never felt  
This wondering joy may yet be good or great:  
But envy him not: he is not fortunate.