

Time by Kathryn Lucker

Alarm clock rings, time.
A new day brings, time.

A new life is formed
A mother sings, time.

A child plays in sand
Last school bell dings, time.

Sweet 16th birthday
High school wild fling, time.

Recruit flies to boot
Warzone bullet sting, time.

Freedom's price is paid
Soldier got his wings, time.

Mother rocks her babe
To his love cling, time.

He looks like daddy
Memories string, time.



North Central Persian Rug. *Tree of Life*. Circa 1900.

A Year by Leah Sander

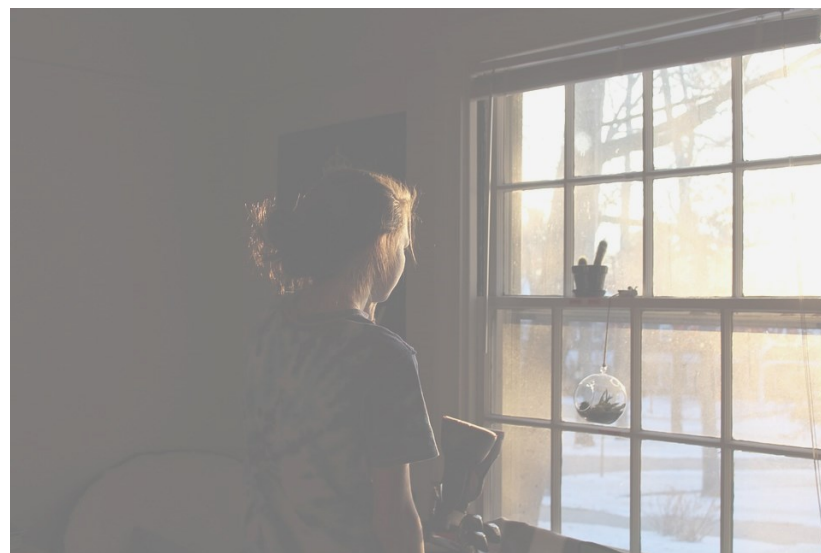
Heavy snow falls on the windowsill
as light frost crawls on the windowsill.

Dandelions pop up by the road
as a bird calls on the windowsill.

The ladybugs creep among the grass
As sunlight sprawls on the windowsill.

The days grow shorter and turn colder
as a leaf stalls on the windowsill.

Leah gazes at Christmas tree lights,
also in balls, on the windowsill.



Royalty Free Photo. Pixabay. Stocknap. (n.d.).

Hope by Carolyn Glaze

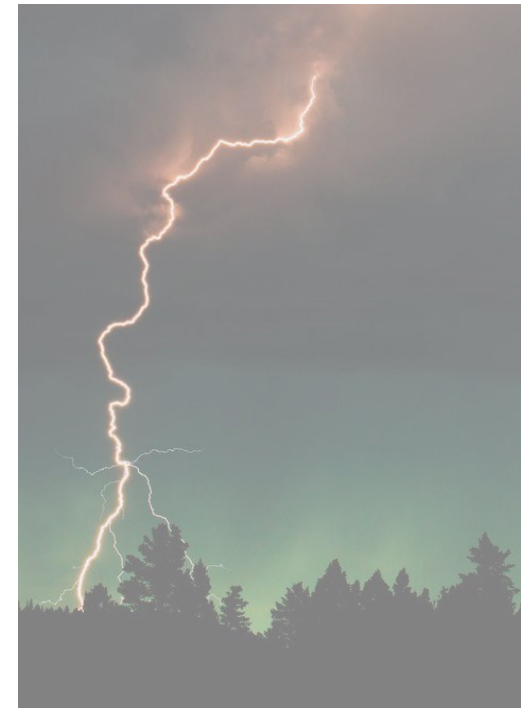
Storms rage, waves crash against our strength, darkness looms yet hope,
A bright beacon, shines from the lighthouse of hope.

Heartache bends, the grief blow strikes, nearly breaking us
As we search and long for comfort in the arms of hope.

Desire beckons, expectations lure, endurance rises
Reasons to go on dwell in the waiting of hope.

Moving to its music, embracing the spins and turns
Reaching for the stars in the dance of hope.

Days well spent, dreams become reality, content now
Finding myself basking in the pleasure of hope.



National Weather Service. Anonymous.

Patience for Justice by Kimberly Kuehl

Where's this majestic knight in shining armor?
One that loves abundantly with binding armor.

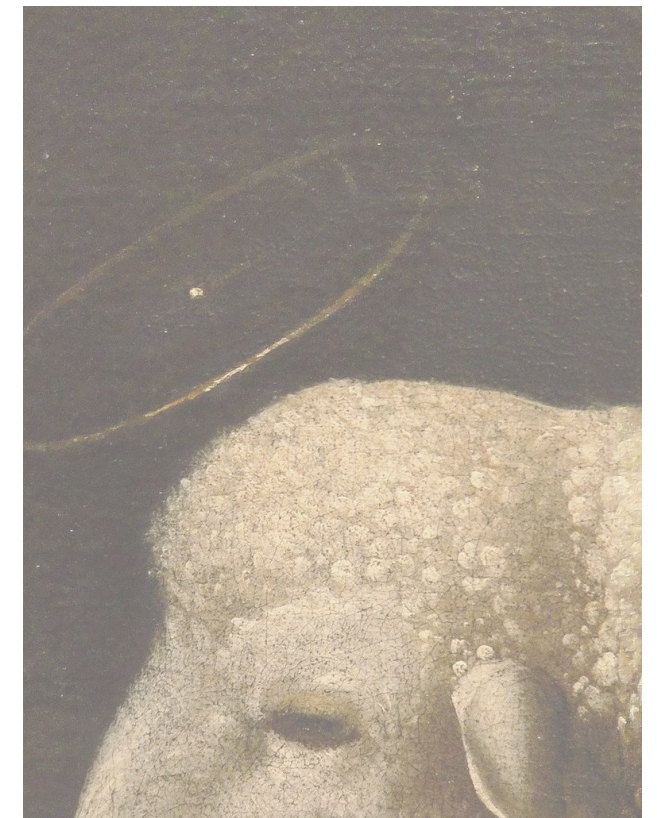
Waiting and needing relief from this wicked world.
It's coming; knocking at the door, reminding armor.

Loneliness incurred! Why insecure and feared?
This should be resolved, destroy grinding armor.

Anticipate existence, marveling what's coming.
Motivated fervently, unrivaled to refining armor.

Understanding, feeling pain possesses shame.
Consequences again, cultivated striving armor.

Everything longing for is colliding the threshold.
A warrior is Kay, supreme with lightning armor.



Francisco de Zurbarán. *Angus Dei*. 1635. Public Domain

... *Of mankind* By: Timothy Hartzler

Speak now of the most foul affliction, this virulent plague of mankind
These wanton horrors, malignant, writhing, seething, and birthed of mankind

This once vestal and tranquil place realized as barren declination
To this former refuge, alas men came, bringing ruin of mankind

So blighted, these creatures, steeped in allegiance to their own faltered minds
And so often did tragedy result from ambition of mankind

Forlorn emptiness now resides where benevolence did once belong
Truth is as an enigma when filtered through perceptions of mankind

Delivered to this world, an uninspiring package signed by the blind
A disguised mess that somehow hides in this seeming order of mankind

Sorrows abound— the foresightless resultance of their frostbitten hearts
a whirlwind of sadness, from uncompromising ideals of mankind

Like blameless victims, they react with the welling eyes of the resigned
To live forever, their passion— this great flood of voices of mankind

Unfulfillment then sullenly wept upon the shoulder of despair
enveloped in the darkest of space, flanked by the shadow of mankind

With reward waning— abundance faded and civility declined
the chill embrace of time-weathered woes— the closing chapter of mankind

In their folly, they did forget themselves, these piteous, earthbound beasts
They were, from this chaos, cast asunder— a reckoning of mankind

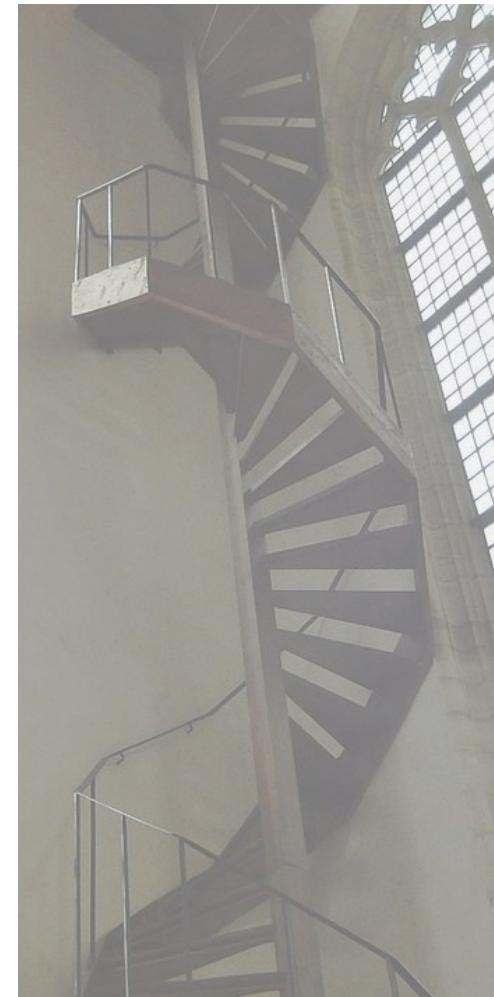
Swiftly it approaches, an end to all things created and designed
the final sunset of the ages, in the bleak twilight of mankind

Finally, when these perceived edens are swept away by cleansing flames
time and rot will be tasked to remove all signs that remain of mankind

In this land ravaged by usurpers, only decadence did I find
boundless, lifeless decadence— and I've beheld the failures of mankind



Eugène Viollet-le-Duc. *The Gargoyles of Notre-Dame Original Sketches*. 1845.



Oude Kerk, Amsterdam. *Spiral Staircase*. Circa 1213.

~*Inner Fire*~ by Jessica Powers

Who would have known the world was born of fire,
When many walk around cold, with fire.

Even as the sun rises on this new day,
A sense of despair fills me, a cold fire.

Who will rise? The cold, greedy, and heartless,
Or those that dream and seek with inner fire.

To fall in darkness with hope a dim light,
A decision to dream and seek, be fire.

To live in the light instead of darkness,
The fire does not burn me, I am the Fire.

Depth of the Soul by Levi Hibner

The vast experience of who you are hides in your soul.
A silent voice inside your mind ringing true to your soul.

Silence thought to hear that voice ring deep as a singing bowl.
With the chatter of thought how easy we forget our soul.

Anxiety grips our breath and from this moment hath stole,
Any hope and true expression from our collective souls.

There we lay beaten and broken in our own deep, dark hole.
From the depth we see light from messiahs to save our souls.

Every day we must choose hidden in our sultry roles.
Love or fear, light or dark, are choices made within the soul.

We should understand that we have all we need— we are whole.
All is in the mind, creativity comes from the soul.

Take the time to feel your emotions— the wear on your soles.
Enjoy your experience, breathe, the story of your soul.

Live the life we have; unconditional love is the goal.
Unbound by space-time, infinite, eternal is the soul.



Royalty Free Photo. Pixabay. *Seraph, or Burning One*. (n.d.).



Robinson, Charles. *Lost in the Woods*. 1911. Public Domain.

IPAD

by Linda Wade

Swift as breath is the onslaught of IPAD
Entrapping the mind that sought the IPAD.

Mesmerizing the child those flash-about images.
How effortlessly their skills for their self-taught IPAD.

Flat— rectangular, POWS— forth enticing games,
Digital digitized..... the overwrought IPAD.

How embracing is it? Addictive for sure,
“I can’t put you down” the juggernaut IPAD.

No! Let words flow, the brush paint, the body amaze:
Conquer life. Make it the afterthought IPAD.

In Music

by Linda Wade

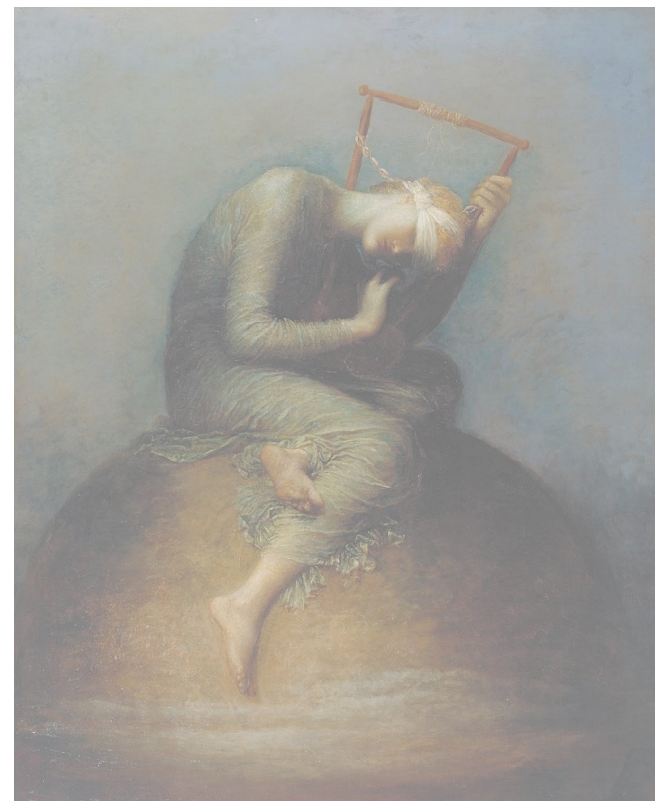
Liberating harmonies— my soul is found in music,
Triplets and staccatos— my beat will pound in music.

Mellow moods meander across the many scores—
Dissonant chords with their clashing notes astound in music.

Sparkling descant sopranos pierce with crystal clarity,
Throaty, guttural altos thrum deepness drowned in music.

Poetic phrases push and pull a theme of deep-thinking feelings,
Lightness and darkness are intricately wound in music.

I am tossed and collected, mind-smoothed and soul-satisfied
Riding ritards and crescendos of the sound in music.



Watts, George Fredrick. *Hope*. 1886. Wiki. Public Domain.



A poet is a nightingale, who sits in
darkness and sings to cheer its own
solitude with sweet sounds.

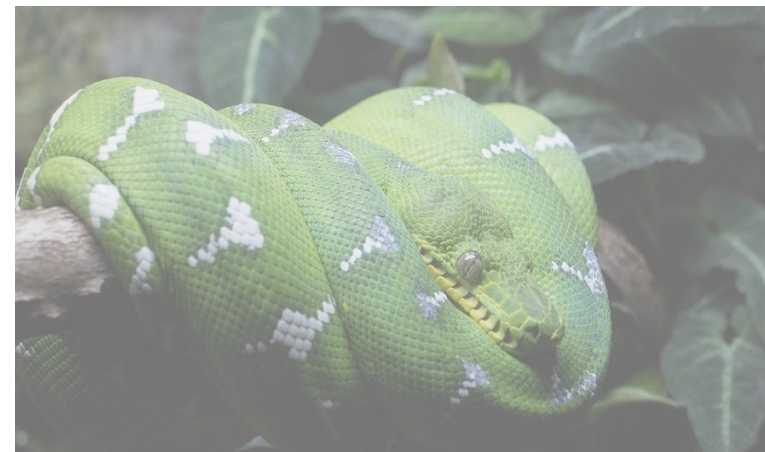
-Percy Bysshe Shelley



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1. On Writing: What is a Poem?
2. History of the Ghazal
- 3-8. Ghazal Submissions

On Writing: What is a Poem



Seraphim, root Hebrew word seraph, fiery serpent, in English. Greek god of wine and madness, Dionysius. How to philosophize with a hammer? Thoth, Egyptian god of writing, law. Incarnate Abraham, father of our faith, learned from Hermes Trismegistus, or vice versa. Form, what form is poetry? The first form, image, the latter, logos. Our dark reaching into the unknown, waiting for the fiery serpent to descend. Thus, Moses made a bronze snake and put it on a pole. Then, anyone who was bitten by the snake, and looked at the bronze serpent, would live.

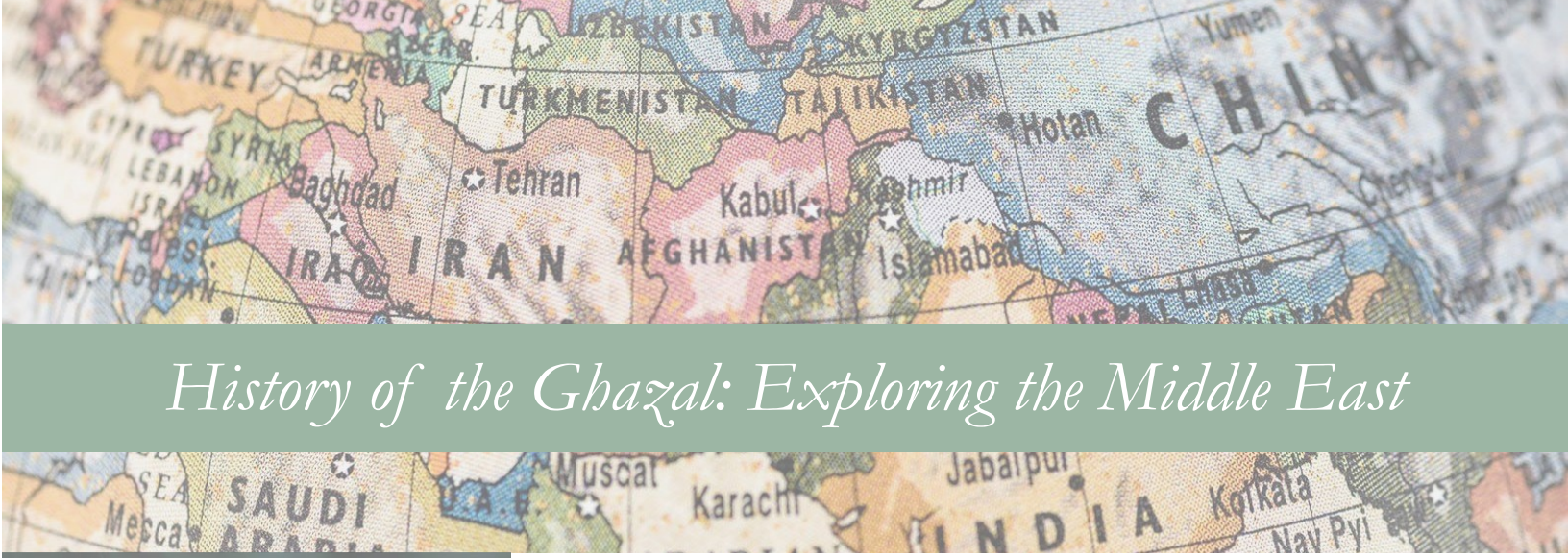
Disenchant you say. How I ask? Poetry bids us throw away apologetics, rather ask ourselves questions. I dare say a poet is one who has killed Noah Webster without any remorse whatsoever. Image upon image, context understood through subjectivity. Poetry is that which destroys objectivity, a submission. The antithesis would be dictionary. By nature dictionaries objectify reality, attempting to explain what can only be experienced.

What does Jonah and the Whale teach us? The question is really how far can your dark reach? Can you find the laws hidden in the text? Maybe the question is what is the written word? Is it a circle within a circle as defined by hermeneutics? Jean Cocteau unmasks himself, “A poet is a liar who tells the truth.” Is this a contradiction, so be it, a contradiction it is, what does that prove? To a poet, paradox is reality.

A poet, within their body, outside the gates of Jerusalem? A poet asks, “What is Jerusalem?” Not so a mathematician. Not so a dime-store theologian. They speak with certainty of what Jerusalem is, lacking exegesis, content with eisegesis. I often hear a poet is unreasonable, impractical; though how do those judging proceed without a proper understanding of the words? What is their map? Where does it lead?

What then is a poem? I have no idea what a poem is. I do know quite a few poets though. Let me speak for a moment on the posture of a poet— this may give us a clue as to their being. They are careful as someone crossing an iced-over stream. Alert as a warrior in enemy territory. Clear as a glass of water. Courteous as a guest. Fluid as melting ice. Shapeable as a block of wood. Receptive as a valley. Like the sound of many waters. Wielding a double-edged sword. Not creating, rather translating.

For the last couple months *Learn* hosted a ghazal writing challenge. I would like to thank everyone who entered and spent their time studying and writing. The content and effort in each poem revealed to me that although I may not know what a poem is, I did learn what the definition of a poet is... (v.) “veiled courage.”



History of the Ghazal: Exploring the Middle East

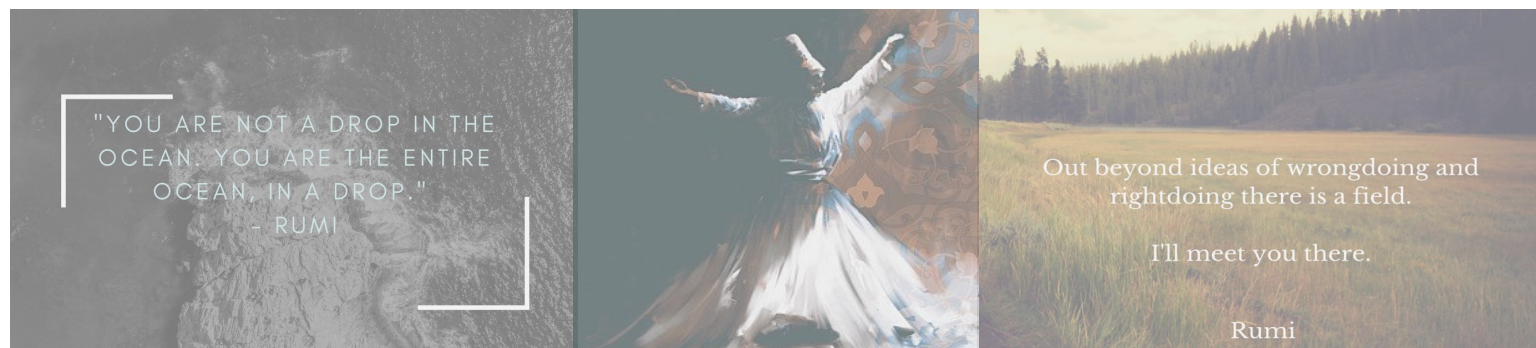


The ghazal is composed of a minimum of five couplets—and typically no more than fifteen—that are structurally, thematically, and emotionally autonomous. Each line of the poem must be of the same length, though meter is not imposed in English. The first couplet introduces a scheme, made up of a rhyme followed by a refrain. Subsequent couplets pick up the same scheme in the second line only, repeating the refrain and rhyming the second line with both lines of the first stanza. The final couplet usually includes the poet’s signature, referring to the author in the first or third person, and frequently including the poet’s own name or a derivation of its meaning. There have been differing forms over time and culture.

I acquired an interest in Middle Eastern culture when I was just a boy reading *A Thousand and One Nights*, grasping a bottle (surely magical) tightly in my hand, awaiting the genie to appear and grant me my wish. How heavily this text has infiltrated our culture cannot be overstated: Disney, Aladdin, Sinbad, Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, DC comics Green Lantern, so many stories of jinn, ghouls, sorcerers, magicians, mermaids, and legendary places. What likely appeals most to the mind is the architecture of the entire text, what literary theorists call “the cliff-

hanger.” It wasn’t until many years later, after trying to grasp the meaning of the Quran, that I came across Sufism, and subsequently Rumi and Hafiz— decoding the structure, finding later they were categorized as ghazal.

To me, a ghazal is architecture in movement. I hadn’t come across any poetic form so tightly woven, yet thematically spacious. A ghazal may be understood as a poetic expression of both the pain of loss, or separation, and the beauty of love in spite of that pain. The form is ancient, originating in Arabic poetry long before the birth of Islam. Many of the major historical ghazal poets were either avowed Sufis themselves (like Rumi or Hafiz), or were sympathizers with Sufi ideas. It is the intense Divine Love of Sufism that serves as a model for all the forms of love found in ghazal poetry. Most ghazal scholars today recognize that some ghazal couplets are exclusively about Divine Love (ishq-e-haqiqi), others are about “earthly love” (ishq-e-majazi), but many of them can be interpreted in either context. The inherent algorithm of a ghazal seems to lend itself well to invoking melancholy, love, longing, or exploring metaphysical questions.



Betts, Ethel Franklin. *Saturday Evening Post*. 1908.

That's Where It's At by Sara Cumberland

The Great American pastime, that's where it's at,
In a diamond in a wide field, that's where it's at.

To play the game requires a mitt, ball, and bat;
Bring a ball cap from the hall rack, that's where it's at.

Choosing teams seems to be back and forth, tit for tat;
Come to his side, come to her side— that's where it's at.

Any can play the game: short or tall, fit or fat;
Round the bases, all the way home, that's where it's at.

When a hit goes “CRACK!” it make my heart pit-a-pat;
Nine inning and that's the end of game, that's where it's at.

Winding up, all come together to chit and chat;
“I'll see you next for a rematch,” that's where it's at.

The Garden by Gordon Bohs

When springtime arrives we greet the sun
The plants awaken and meet the sun

The gardeners notice and till the soil
The seeds are closed till they see the sun

The weeds spring quickly to choke the plants
Weed the soil so they're burnt by the sun.

Emerging plants will search for light
The clouds roll back to free the sun

Growing plants reaching out for support
Staking by Gordon for glee in the sun.



Georges-Pierre Seurat. *The Gardener*. 1882-83. Public Domain.