14. Once Again: Write a One Sentence Poem

It’s a game of wild clauses and clauses within clauses.

**Deep Winter**

In the cold blue shadow behind a shed, among young ash and mulberry trees standing in discarded tires, and next to a roll of used and reused sheep wire and a sheaf of rusty posts, I am alone among the others who have stood here, as they looked out over the snowy fields, holding their breath against the stillness, against our awareness of each other, whole generations empty between us like gaps between saplings, all of us having come tracking through winter to look for something to use to prop up something else, or for a part of a part, and not having found it, standing both inside and outside of time, becoming a piece of some great, rusty work we seem to fit exactly.

Ted Kooser
in *Splitting an Order*

**New Restrictions**

It doesn’t matter how many Wallace Stevens poems you’ve memorized or if you had sex in the graveyard like an upside-down puppet or painted your apartment red so it feels like sleeping inside a heart or the trees were frozen with ravens which you sent pictures of to everyone you know or your pie dough’s perfect or you once ran a sub-5-minute mile or you’re on the last draft of your mystery novel and still don’t know if the vicar did it
or every morning that summer
you saw a fox stepping through the fog
but it got no closer
or once you helped drag a deer
off the road by the antlers
it blinked
or which song comes from which side
of your mouth as you drive
all night all night all night
or how deep and long you carry
a hitch in your breath after crying
or shot a man in Tennessee
or were so happy in France
or left your favorite scarf in a café,
the one with the birds and terrible art
or the Klimt
or you call your mother once a week
even after she’s dead
or can’t see a swan without panic
or have almost figured out
what happened to you as a child,
urge, urge, nothing but urge
or 600 daffodils
or a knife in the glove box
or a butterfly on a bell,
you can’t park here.

Dean Young

People We will Never See Again

Today in a doctor’s crowded waiting room
sat a sad little man of maybe fifty,
wearing a baggy black suit, a black shirt
buttoned to the neck, and black work shoes,
his thinning silver hair oiled back,
and he began singing, but softly, the words
to a song that played from hidden speakers
somewhere above our heavy silence,
music we hadn’t noticed before he began,
in his whispery voice, to sing for us.

Ted Kooser
from New Poems in Kindest Regards
Osprey

Oh, large brown, thickly feathered creature
with a distinctive white head,
you, perched on the top branch
of a tree near the lake shore,

as soon as I guide this boat back to the dock
and walk up the grassy path to the house,
before I unzip my windbreaker
and lift the binoculars from around my neck,

before I wash the gasoline from my hands,
before I tell anyone I’m back,
and before I hang the ignition key on its nail,
or pour myself a drink—

I’m thinking a vodka soda with lemon—
I will look you up in my
illustrated guide to North American birds
and I promise I will learn what you are called.

Billy Collins
in *Aimless Love: New and Selected Poems*