

Ages 14-16: A Poem and Story Starter

Spring Street

Spring Street's lamps glowing like a matchsticks blaze,
Smokeless halos in a dark-hungry haze,
'Til Darkness splinters, dry and dusty mold,
'Til primrose-light brings warm sepia-fold.

Dawn kindles the clouds to light lambswool-flames,
Roving dapples graze the greys in tame games,
As light-drops rain to water the dark,
Wind's bleating hush depletes as rays lark.

Light hugs candy-wrapper petals' frost-fears,
Grass and buds growing green velveteen ears,
Pollen-mote light floats like piano notes,
Notes of jazzy flight to mellow calm-coat.

Raindrops puddle-dance in water halos,
Pit-pattering with jazzy shadow-vibes,
Silver-steel shadows pulse like tidal rings,
Ere long gone as time flows on Water's wings.

Streetlamps and sky smudge only to clarify,
To melt the scene and reform with angelic sigh,
A sigh as steely-blue as a warming sky,
A sky that speaks of infinite love-high.

A sky that speaks of sanctuary-belonging,
Heaven's water-mirrors of Rain's own song,
Reform, clarity and compassion sow,
In Sun's honey-glaze or Moon's mellow glow.

Bonny birdsong, Time's divinest dimes,
Spent freely by bird-seraphim sublime,
Are notes of heart-flame, pure inferno-motes,
Long cold-camouflaged in old cold-storm rotes.

Yet primrose pollen-motes of thornless care,
As seeds of holy love: root, grow, bloom, dare,
Eat the gloom and keep consuming the cold,
Gnawing sharp bites into Wind's woeful fold.

Rebirthing bravery from holdfast love,
Blazing brighter as ice threatens above,
Honey-light kindling slumbering passions,
Harp-chord rain full-quenching dreams, no rations.

Blessed avenue oak trees of silent bark,
Blessed guardians of day, twilight and dark,
Of legendary grace, keepers of heartwood rings,
Rings born of Sun's syrup, not bitter things.

Keep motes of sweet souls safe from Winter's charms,
A treasure-trove of valley groves with arms,
Immune to ice-beauty's bold-siren call,
Anchoring doves to real love immortal.

Gnarled skin scars, lyric as a story-sage,
Titan-tales on each dawn-page for no wage,
Yet to stand as Season's unblinking face,
As sentinels woven of lambswool grace.

Deep roots that blossom, warming lost-forlorn,
Cosseting the soul war-torn, salve to scorn,
Brown wands as magical care in the air,
Leaves casting light-shade spells of Spring's repair.

Smoking out scorn, ever erasing wrath,
Ever laughing at phantom storms' warpath,
Ferocity fades – gaunt ghost of gossip,
Fickle foe force-bows to breath of rose-hip.

Warm breezes bustle like kite-ribbon streams,
Warmer birdsong weaves lost kite-string dreams,
As each green flame-flute sweet symphony sows,
Vivid petal cellophane-velvet glows.

How Spring's light-puddle halos magnify.
My most childish soul, my innocent eye,
Folding dreams within warm wonder to grow,
To sprout as acorns to oak-marshmallow.

Story Starter: **Spring Street**

Spring Street had wallowed through long winter months. A feeble light struggled against a sadness that clung, camouflaged and cold. Nobody needed eyes to feel the constant theft of heat; every budding joy had been burgled bare. Yet spring eventually sang to us as a quiet hymn, its lyrics written in the dawn as an ancient lullaby. Though coal-dark clouds might rule the sky and growl in low rumbles, the sun's words only glowed brighter. Each day the rain warmed in subtle slivers of shade, each one a close clone of the last. Yet they summed to a *something*, and that is very different from a whole lotta *nothing*. Slim though they were, hope is an optimist, a master that magnifies every merry mote. We could dine happily on this new generosity, while the waning winter remained blithely clueless to the budding tendrils of the season. Then, one by one, the guardian trees that lined the avenue opened as portals and through them stepped...

Prompt questions:

- How do the tactile images of 'green velveteen' and 'lambswool-flames' contrast with the sterile, stealing cold of the preceding winter?
- In what ways does the personification of winter as a 'clueless' thief shift the power dynamic of the setting from victimhood to resilience?
- How does the metaphorical use of the sun's 'warm words' and an 'ancient lullaby' reinforce the theme of life as a recurring, protective narrative?
- What does the evolution of the narrative voice from observing a 'feeble light' to witnessing 'portals' suggest about the protagonist's psychological transition?