

*Directions:* Using the “Explication Checklist” handout and the example explications, pick one of the following poems and write a 2-3 page explication. This project must be typed, as it will need to be submitted to turnitin.com to receive full credit. The due date for this paper is **Monday, October 31<sup>st</sup>**. Please see the rubric on Mrs. Jones’ website, [jonesclassesonline.weebly.com](http://jonesclassesonline.weebly.com) for a complete list of the grading criteria.

**next to of course god america i**

*e. e. cummings*

“next to of course god america i  
love you land of the pilgrims’ and so forth oh  
say you see by the dawn’s early my  
country ‘tis of centuries come and go  
and are no more what of it we should worry  
in every language even deafanddumb  
thy sons acclaim your glorious name by gorrry  
by jingo by gee by gosh by gum  
why talk of beauty what could be more beaut-  
iful than these heroic happy dead  
who rushed like lions to the roaring slaughter  
they did not stop to think they died instead  
then shall the voice of liberty be mute?”

He spoke.      And drank rapidly a glass of water.

**Tell all the Truth but tell it slant**

*Emily Dickinson*

Tell all the truth but tell it slant –  
Success in Circuit lies  
Too bright for our infirm Delight  
The Truth’s superb surprise  
As Lightning to the Children eased  
With explanation kind  
The Truth must dazzle gradually  
Or every man be blind –

## **The Veteran**

*Margaret Postgate Cole*

We came upon him sitting in the sun,  
Blinded by war, and left. And past the fence  
There came young soldiers from the Hand and  
Flower.  
Asking advice of his experience.

And he said this, and that, and told them tales,  
And all the nightmares of each empty head  
Blew into air; then, hearing us beside,  
‘Poor chaps, how’d they know what it’s like?’  
he said.

And we stood there, and watched him as he sat,  
Turning his sockets where they went away,  
Until it came to one of us to ask  
‘And you’re – how old?’  
‘Nineteen, the third of May.’

## **What You Hear**

*Patricia McCormick*

Before it starts,  
you hear a zipper baring its teeth,  
perhaps the sound of a shoe being kicked aside in haste,  
the wincing of the mattress.

Once it starts,  
you may hear the sound of horns bleating in the street  
below,  
the peanut vender hawking his treats,  
or the *pock* of a rubber ball as the children shout and play  
in the school yard nearby.

But if you are lucky,  
or if you work hard at it,  
you hear nothing.

Nothing, perhaps, but the clicking of the fan overhead,  
the steady ticking away of seconds  
until it is over.

Until it starts again.

## **If We Must Die**

*Claude McKay*

If we must die, let it not be like hogs  
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,  
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,  
Making their mock at our accursed lot.  
If we must die, O let us nobly die,  
So that our precious blood may not be shed  
In vain; then even the monsters we defy  
Shall be constrained to honor us through dead!  
O kinsmen! we must meet the common foe!  
Though far outnumbered let us show us brave,  
And for their thousand blows deal one deathblow!  
What though before us lies the open grave?  
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,  
Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!

## **Cinderella**

*Sylvia Plath*

The prince leans to the girl in scarlet heels,  
Her green eyes slant, hair flaring in a fan  
Of silver as the rondo slows; now reels  
Begin on tilted violins to span  
  
The whole revolving tall glass palace hall  
Where guests slide gliding into light like wine;  
Rose candles flicker on the lilac wall  
Reflecting in a million flagons' shine,  
  
And glided couples all in whirling trance  
Follow holiday revel begun long since,  
Until near twelve the strange girl all at once  
Guilt-stricken halts, pales, clings to the prince  
  
As amid the hectic music and cocktail talk  
She hears the caustic ticking of the clock.