Definition of an Ode: a lyric poem in the form of an address to a particular subject, often elevated in style or manner and written in varied or irregular meter. It is usually addressed TO the subject (a person, place, thing, or idea), but sometimes can just be centered around it. Odes are usually praising of their topic, but they can also be pleading with it, especially if the topic is death, a lover, or fate, etc.

**Read each of the following poems and identify the topic, the tone, and any particular lines that stand out to you as being interesting.**

Ode for the American Dead in Asia

**Related Poem Content Details**

BY [THOMAS MCGRATH](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/thomas-mcgrath)

God love you now, if no one else will ever,

Corpse in the paddy, or dead on a high hill

In the fine and ruinous summer of a war

You never wanted. All your false flags were

Of bravery and ignorance, like grade school maps:

Colors of countries you would never see—

Until that weekend in eternity

When, laughing, well armed, perfectly ready to kill

The world and your brother, the safe commanders sent

You into your future. Oh, dead on a hill,

Dead in a paddy, leeched and tumbled to

A tomb of footnotes. We mourn a changeling: you:

Handselled to poverty and drummed to war

By distinguished masters whom you never knew.

The bee that spins his metal from the sun,

The shy mole drifting like a miner ghost

Through midnight earth—all happy creatures run

As strict as trains on rails the circuits of

Blind instinct. Happy in your summer follies,

You mined a culture that was mined for war:

The state to mold you, church to bless, and always

The elders to confirm you in your ignorance.

No scholar put your thinking cap on nor

Warned that in dead seas fishes died in schools

Before inventing legs to walk the land.

The rulers stuck a tennis racket in your hand,

An Ark against the flood. In time of change

Courage is not enough: the blind mole dies,

And you on your hill, who did not know the rules.

Wet in the windy counties of the dawn

The lone crow skirls his draggled passage home:

And God (whose sparrows fall aslant his gaze,

Like grace or confetti) blinks and he is gone,

And you are gone. Your scarecrow valor grows

And rusts like early lilac while the rose

Blooms in Dakota and the stock exchange

Flowers. Roses, rents, all things conspire

To crown your death with wreaths of living fire.

And the public mourners come: the politic tear

Is cast in the Forum. But, in another year,

We will mourn you, whose fossil courage fills

The limestone histories: brave: ignorant: amazed:

Dead in the rice paddies, dead on the nameless hills.

Ode to Marbles

BY [MAX MENDELSOHN](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/max-mendelsohn)

I love the sound of marbles

scattered on the worn wooden floor,

like children running away in a game of hide-and-seek.

I love the sight of white marbles,

blue marbles,

green marbles, black,

new marbles, old marbles,

iridescent marbles,

with glass-ribboned swirls,

dancing round and round.

I love the feel of marbles,

cool, smooth,

rolling freely in my palm,

like smooth-sided stars

that light up the worn world.

Ode to a Blizzard

BY [TOM DISCH](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/tom-disch)

O! wonderful for weight and whiteness!

Ideolog whose absolutes

Are always proven right

By white and then

More white and white again,

Winning the same argument year

After year by making the opposition

Disappear!

O! dear miniature of infinity with no

End in sight and no snow-

Flake exactly like

Another, all

A little different no

Matter how many may fall,

Just like our own DNA or the human face

Eternal!

O! still keep covering the street

And sidewalks, cemeteries, even

Our twice-shoveled drive,

And all that is alive,

With geometries that sleet

Will freeze into Death's

Impromptu vision of a heaven

Wholly white!

For we know who your sponsor is, whose will

You so immensely serve,

Whose chill is more severe

Than any here.

Though his name may be unspoken,

His commandments are unbroken,

And every monument that you erect

Belongs to him!

Write your own ode:

Choose a topic below or one of your own. Then, write a poem directed to or focused around your subject. Make sure that you are elevating your language. Your ode should be between 15-20 lines long.

Chocolate

Sleep

School

Iphone/Cellphone, etc

Trees

Pencil

Books

Friendship

Love

Boyfriend/girlfriend

Crush

Hairbrush

Laptop/computer

Black Friday

Christmas

Writing

Custodians

Teachers

Politicians

Selfies

Twitter

Facebook

Homework