

Dream Song 14

By John Berryman

Life, friends, is boring. We must not say so.
After all, the sky flashes, the great sea yearns,
we ourselves flash and yearn,
and moreover my mother told me as a boy
(repeatingly) 'Ever to confess you're bored
means you have no

Inner Resources.' I conclude now I have no
inner resources, because I am heavy bored.
Peoples bore me,
literature bores me, especially great literature,
Henry bores me, with his plights & gripes
as bad as achilles,

who loves people and valiant art, which bores me.
And the tranquil hills, & gin, look like a drag
and somehow a dog
has taken itself & its tail considerably away
into mountains or sea or sky, leaving
behind: me, wag.

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Source: *The Dream Songs* (Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1991)



A scholar and professor as well as a poet, John Berryman is best-known for *The Dream Songs*, an intensely personal sequence of 385 poems which brought him the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award. In these he invented a style and form able to accommodate a vast range of material while expressing his turbulent emotions. Made up of three six-line stanzas that teem with allusions to past and present events and to literary figures, *The Dream Songs* display an astonishing variety of poetic resources that include slangy diction and a nervous, fractured syntax. His poems are influenced by the Irish poet W.B. Yeats, psychoanalysis, and Shakespeare, whose plays and poems Berryman frequently taught.

