“Miracles” by Walt Whitman

Why, who makes much of a miracle?  
As to me I know of nothing else but miracles,  
Whether I walk the streets of Manhattan,  
Or dart my sight over the roofs of houses toward the sky,  
Or wade with naked feet along the beach just in the edge of the  
water,  
Or stand under trees in the woods,  
Or talk by day with any one I love, or sleep in the bed at night  
with any one I love,  
Or sit at table at dinner with the rest,  
Or look at strangers opposite me riding in the car,  
Or watch honey-bees busy around the hive of a summer  
forenoon,  
Or animals feeding in the fields,  
Or birds, or the wonderfulness of insects in the air,  
Or the wonderfulness of the sundown, or of stars shining so  
quiet and bright,  
Or the exquisite delicate thin curve of the new moon in spring;  
These with the rest, one and all, are to me miracles,  
The whole referring, yet each distinct and in its place.

To me every hour of the light and dark is a miracle,  
Every cubic inch of space is a miracle,  
Every square yard of the surface of the earth is spread with the  
same,  
Every foot of the interior swarms with the same.

To me the sea is a continual miracle,  
The fishes that swim—the rocks—the motion of the waves—the  
ships with men in them,  
What stranger miracles are there?

Walt Whitman, often referred to as the "Bard of Democracy" and considered one of America's most influential poets. He was born on May 31, 1819 in West Hills, Long Island, New York. The second of Louisa Van Velsor's and Walter Whitman's eight surviving children, he grew up in a family of modest means. While earlier Whitmans had owned a large parcel of farmland, much of it had been sold off by the time Walt was born. As a result, his father struggled through a series of attempts to recoup some of that earlier wealth as a farmer, carpenter, and real estate speculator.
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.

**John Allyn McAlpin Berryman** was an American poet and scholar, born in McAlester, Oklahoma. He was a major figure in American poetry in the second half of the 20th century and was considered a key figure in the Confessional school of poetry.
"Slam, Dunk, & Hook" by Yusef Komunyaka

Fast breaks. Lay ups. With Mercury’s Insignia on our sneakers, We outmaneuvered to footwork Of bad angels. Nothing but a hot Swish of strings like silk Ten feet out. In the roundhouse Labyrinth our bodies Created, we could almost Last forever, poised in midair Like storybook sea monsters. A high note hung there A long second. Off The rim. We’d corkscrew Up & dunk balls that exploded The skullcap of hope & good Intention. Lanky, all hands & feet...sprung rhythm. We were metaphysical when girls Cheered on the sidelines. Tangled up in a falling, Muscles were a bright motor Double-flashing to the metal hoop Nailed to our oak. When Sonny Boy’s mama died He played nonstop all day, so hard Our backboard splintered.

Glistening with sweat, We rolled the ball off Our fingertips. Trouble Was there slapping a blackjack Against an open palm. Dribble, drive to the inside, & glide like a sparrow hawk. Lay ups. Fast breaks. We had moves we didn’t know We had. Our bodies spun On swivels of bone & faith, Through a lyric slipknot Of joy, & we knew we were Beautiful & dangerous.

Yusef Komunyaka’a’s poems are rooted in his experiences as an African American growing up in rural Louisiana and his service in the Vietnam War. Influenced by the jazz music he loves, as well as by people’s everyday speech, his poetry has won a number of awards, including the Pulitzer Prize in 1994.