

Paul Eluard (France)



Paul Éluard (14 December 1895 – 18 November 1952), was a French poet and one of the founders of the [surrealist](#) movement. Eluard was born to a lower-middle-class family in Saint Denis, Paris. His father was a bookkeeper, his mother, helped out with the household income by making dresses. At the age of 16 Paul was sent to a Swiss sanatorium for tuberculosis, during this time he became highly interested in poetry. Upon his return to France he joined the army and was injured from exposure to toxic gas. After his war experience, in 1917, he released what is considered to be his first noteworthy poetry volume. Eluard was briefly involved with the Dada Movement, meeting Tristan Tzara, Andre Breton, and other member of surrealist and Dadaist circles. Like Breton, Aragon, Peret, Soupault and other intellectuals. His reputation as a poet was established with the publication of "Capitale de la Doluer ' in 1926. In 1924 Paul's whereabouts vanished from public knowledge. Rumors that he had died, spread around and became truth, until after seven months he returned. Eluard told the people that he had journeyed from Marseilles to Tahiti, Indonesia, and Ceylon. Later on it was discovered that it was connected with the loss of his wife Gala to the surrealist artist Salvador Dali. Eluard was active within the international communist movement in the cultural field. He traveled in Britain, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Mexico, and Russia, but not the United States; because he was refused a visa as he was a Communist. Paul's idealism, kindness and inability to see the reality of the Soviet Union led the poet to admire Stalin as a cultural force for good. According to Eluard, the mission of poetry was to renew language in order to effect radical changes in all areas of existence. He saw poetry as an action capable of arousing awareness in his readers, and identified with the leftist struggle for political, social and sexual liberation. During his lifetime Paul managed to publish over seventy books consisting of; poetry, literary, and political views. Eluard died in Charenton-le-Pont in 1952.

I Only Wish To Love You

I only wish to love you
A storm fills the valley
A fish the river

I have made you the size of my solitude
The whole world to hide in
Days and nights to understand

To see no more in your eyes
Than what I think of you
And a world in your image

And days and nights ruled by your eyelids.

Badr Chakir Assayab (Morocco)



Badr Shākīr al-Sayyāb (1926–1964) is the unrivalled champion of the Arab Free Verse movement. One of the most well-known poets of the twentieth century, he revolutionized modern Arab poetry with his experiments in form, language, and content. Sayyāb introduced political commitment (*iltizām*) as concept into his poetry, interweaving it with myths of martyrdom and self-sacrifice in search for a better society. Coupling political commitment with a new form, radically breaking with the traditional classical forms and tropes, Sayyāb succeeded in liberating Arab poetry from the restraints and restrictions of its literary conventions. Even though later on it turned out that Sayyāb's *Weltanschauung* had been too naïve, he is the undisputed master of a new lyrical diction and sensitivity that paved the way for the following generations.

Song of the Rain

Your eyes are two palm tree forests in early light,
Or two balconies from which the moonlight recedes
When they smile, your eyes, the vines put forth their eaves,
And lights dance .. like moons in a river
Rippled by the blade of an oar at break of day;
As if stars were throbbing in the depths of them . . .

And they drown in a mist of sorrow translucent
Like the sea stroked by the hand of nightfall;
The warmth of winter is in it, and the shudder of autumn,
And death and birth, darkness and light;
A sobbing flares up to tremble in my soul
And a savage elation embracing the sky,
Frenzy of a child frightened by the moon.

It is as if archways of mist drank the clouds
And drop by drop dissolved in the rain ...
As if children snickered in the vineyard bowers,
The song of the rain rippled the silence of birds in the trees

Rain song
Drop,
Drop,
Drop,

Evening yawned, from low clouds
Heavy tears are streaming still.
It is as if a child before sleep were rambling on
About his mother (a year ago he went to wake her, did not
find her; Then when he kept on asking, he was told:
"After tomorrow, she'll come back again"
That she must come back again,
Yet his playmates whisper that she is there
In the hillside, sleeping her death for ever,
Eating the earth around her, drinking the rain;
As if a forlorn fisherman gathering nets
Cursed the waters and fate
And scattered a song at moonset,
Drip, drop, the rain
Drip, drop, the rain

Do you know what sorrow the rain can inspire?
And how gutters weep when it pours down?
Do you know how lost a solitary person feels in the rain?
Endless,- like spilt blood, like hungry people, like love, like
children, like the dead,-
Endless the rain.

Your two eyes take me wandering with the rain,
Lightning's from across the Gulf sweep
The shores of Iraq
With stars and shells,
As if a dawn were about to break from them
But night pulls over them a coverlet of blood.

Song of the Rain

I cry out to the Gulf: "O Gulf,
Giver of pearls, shells and death!"
And the echo replies, as if lamenting:
"O Gulf: Giver of shells and death".

I can almost hear Iraq husbanding the thunder,
Storing lightning in the mountains and plains,
So that if the seal were broken by men
The winds would leave in the valley not a trace of Thamud.

I can almost hear the palmtrees drinking the rain,
Hear the villages moaning and emigrants
With oar and sail fighting

The Gulf winds of storm and thunder, singing
Rain.. rain..rain (Drip, drop, the rain)
And there is hunger in Iraq,
The harvest time scatters the grain in-it,
That crows and locusts may gobble their fill,
Granaries and stones grind on and on,
Mills turn in the fields, with humans turning
Drip, drop, the rain
Drip, Drop, Drop

How many tears we shed when came the night for
leaving
We made the rain an excuse, not wishing to be blamed
Drip, drop, the rain
Drip, drop, the rain
Since we had been children, the sky
Would be clouded in wintertime,
And down would pour the rain,
And every year when earth turned green the hunger
struck us.
Not a year has passed without hunger in Iraq.
Rain
Drip, drop, the rain
Drip, drop

In every drop of rain
A red or yellow color buds from the seeds of flowers.
Every tear wept by the hungry and naked people
And every spilt drop of slaves' blood
Is a smile aimed at a new dawn,
A nipple turning rosy in an infant's lips
In the young world of tomorrow, bringer of life.
Drip.....
Drop.....
(the rain . . .In the rain)
Iraq will blossom one day

Song of the Rain

I cry out to the Gulf: "O Gulf:

Giver of pearls, shells and death!"

The echo replies as if lamenting:

'O Gulf: Giver of shells and death."

And across the sands from among its lavish gifts

The Gulf scatters fuming froth and shells

And the skeletons of miserable drowned emigrants

Who drank death forever

From the depths of the Gulf, from the ground of its silence,

And in Iraq a thousand serpents drink the nectar

From a flower the Euphrates has nourished with dew.

I hear the echo

Ringling in the Gulf:

Rain . . .

Drip, drop, the rain . . .

Drip, drop.

In every drop of rain

A red or yellow color buds from the seeds of flowers.

Every tear wept by the hungry and naked people

And every spilt drop of slaves' blood

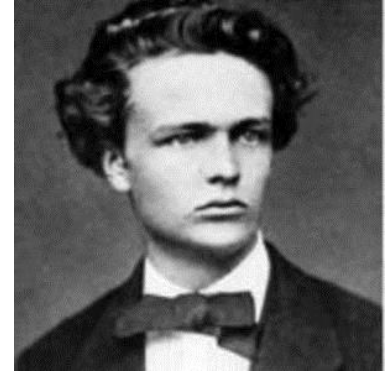
Is a smile aimed at a new dawn,

A nipple turning rosy in an infant's lips

In the young world of tomorrow, bringer of life.

And still the rain pours down.

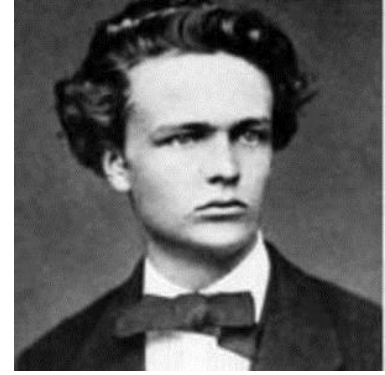
August Strindberg (Sweden)



Johan August Strindberg (22 January 1849 – 14 May 1912) was a Swedish playwright, novelist, poet, essayist and painter. A prolific writer who often drew directly on his personal experience, Strindberg's career spanned four decades, during which time he wrote over sixty plays and more than thirty works of fiction, autobiography, history, cultural analysis, and politics. A bold experimenter and iconoclast throughout, he explored a wide range of dramatic methods and purposes, from naturalistic [tragedy](#), [monodrama](#), and history plays, to his anticipations of [expressionist](#) and [surrealist](#) dramatic techniques. From his earliest work, Strindberg developed innovative forms of dramatic action, language, and visual composition. He is considered the "father" of modern [Swedish literature](#) and his [The Red Room](#) (1879) has frequently been described as the first modern Swedish novel.

The [Royal Theatre](#) rejected his first major play, [Master Olof](#), in 1872; it was not until 1881, at the age of thirty-two, that its première at the [New Theatre](#) gave him his theatrical breakthrough. In his plays [The Father](#) (1887), [Miss Julie](#) (1888), and [Creditors](#) (1889), he created naturalistic dramas that – building on the established accomplishments of [Henrik Ibsen](#)'s prose [problem plays](#) while rejecting their use of the structure of the [well-made play](#) – responded to the call-to-arms of [Émile Zola](#)'s manifesto "Naturalism in the Theatre" (1881) and the example set by [André Antoine](#)'s newly established [Théâtre Libre](#) (opened 1887). In [Miss Julie](#), characterisation replaces plot as the predominant dramatic element (in contrast to [melodrama](#) and the well-made play) and the determining role of [heredity](#) and the [environment](#) on the "vacillating, disintegrated" characters is emphasized. Strindberg modeled his short-lived Scandinavian Experimental Theatre (1889) in [Copenhagen](#) on Antoine's theatre and he explored the theory of Naturalism in his essays "On Psychic Murder" (1887), "On Modern Drama and the Modern Theatre" (1889), and a preface to [Miss Julie](#), the last of which is probably the best-known statement of the principles of the theatrical movement.

August Strindberg (Sweden)



During the 1890s he spent significant time abroad engaged in scientific experiments and studies of the occult. A series of psychotic attacks between 1894 and 1896 (referred to as his "*Inferno* crisis") led to his hospitalization and return to Sweden. Under the influence of the ideas of [Emanuel Swedenborg](#), he resolved after his recovery to become "the Zola of the Occult". In 1898 he returned to play-writing with [To Damascus](#), which, like [The Great Highway](#) (1909), is a dream-play of spiritual pilgrimage. His [A Dream Play](#) (1902) – with its radical attempt to dramatize the workings of the [unconscious](#) by means of an abolition of conventional dramatic time and space and the splitting, doubling, merging, and multiplication of its characters – was an important precursor to both expressionism and surrealism. He also returned to writing historical drama, the genre with which he had begun his play-writing career. He helped to run the [Intimate Theatre](#) from 1907, a small-scale theatre, modeled on [Max Reinhardt's](#) *Kammerspielhaus*, that staged his [chamber plays](#) (such as [The Ghost Sonata](#)).

We Waves

WE, we waves,
That are rocking the winds
To rest—
Green cradles, we waves!

Wet are we, and salty;
Leap like flames of fire—
Wet flames are we:
Burning, extinguishing;
Cleansing, replenishing;
Bearing, engendering.

We, we waves,
That are rocking the winds
To rest!

Indra

DOWN to the sand-covered earth.
Straw from the harvested fields
soiled our feet;
Dust from the high-roads,
Smoke from the cities,
Foul-smelling breaths,
Fumes from cellars and kitchens,
All we endured.
Then to the open sea we fled,
Filling our lungs with air,
Shaking our wings,
And laving our feet.

Indra, Lord of the Heavens,
Hear us!
Hear our sighing!
Unclean is the earth;
Evil is life;
Neither good nor bad
Can men be deemed.
As they can, they live,
One day at a time.
Sons of dust, through dust they
journey;
Born out of dust, to dust they
return.
Given they were, for trudging,
Feet, not wings for flying.
Dusty they grow—
Lies the fault then with them,
Or with Thee?

Reference

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