I’m Still Here (1957)
Langston Hughes

I’ve been scarred and battered
My hopes the wind done scattered.
Snow has friz me, sun has baked me.
Looks like between ‘em
They done tried to make me
Stop laughin’, stop lovin’, stop livin’---
But I don’t care!
I’m still here!
The Commons
Peter Makuck

They are changing its look.
A bulldozer pierces its skin,
noses in red depression

and mows down trees at the edge.
A crane comes up
with jawfuls of earth, the stump

and dangling roots of an oak—
an image of Saturn
fisting his half-eaten child.

A rust wind blows at dusk
from the diggings, dirt sifting
back. There is nothing to help.

In our daydreams
or the flickerings of deep sleep,
The Commons will never change:

the bell is ringing,
we gather in the sun,
the rifles are about to speak

May 4, 1970
Kent State University

(on May 4, 1970, 4 students were shot & killed by the Ohio National Guard during a peaceful anti-war protest at Kent State University)
The Fish (1983)
Mary Oliver

The first fish
I ever caught
would not lie down
quiet in the pail
but flailed and sucked
at the burning
amazement of the air
and died
in the slow pouring off
of rainbows. Later

I opened his body and separated
the flesh from the bones
and ate him. Now the sea
is in me: I am the fish, the fish
glitters in me; we are
risen, tangled together, certain to fall
back to the sea. Out of pain,
and pain, and more pain
we feed this feverish plot, we are nourished
by the mystery.
I Am Offering this Poem (1990)
Jimmy Santiago Baca

I am offering this poem to you, since I have nothing else to give. Keep it like a warm coat when winter comes to cover you, or like a pair of thick socks the cold cannot bite through,

I love you,

I have nothing else to give you, so it is a pot full of yellow corn to warm your belly in winter, it is a scarf for your head, to wear over your hair, to tie up around your face,

I love you,

Keep it, treasure this as you would if you were lost, needing direction, in the wilderness life becomes when mature; and in the corner of your drawer, tucked away like a cabin or hogan in dense trees, come knocking, and I will answer, give you directions, and let you warm yourself by this fire, rest by this fire, and make you feel safe

I love you,

It’s all I have to give, and all anyone needs to live, and to go on living inside, when the world outside no longer cares if you live or die; remember,

I love you,

I love you.