

Jim Sanborn
Fragments of Fiction (2003)
Excerpts

Line 1, Classical Latin
Ovid, *The Art of Love*

May I be he whose hair she furiously rends! May I be he whose tender cheeks her nails attack! Whom weeping she regards, at whom she glares with angry eyes, without whom she could not live, though fain she would! When she has raged her fill when she seems your certain foe, then seek the treaty of a love embrace: that will make her gentle.

Line 2, English
Jeanette Winterson, *Written on the Body*

When she lifted the soup spoon to her lips how I longed to be that innocent piece of stainless steel. I would gladly have traded the blood in my body for a half a pint of vegetable stock.

Line 3, Classical Greek
Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*

Here goes, then; no need to beat around the bush. Ladies, if we're going to force the men to make peace, we're going to have to give up—Give up what? Tell us. You'll do it then? We'll do it even if it means our death! All right. We're going to have to give up the...

Line 4, Spanish
Isabel Allende, *Portrait in Sepia*

He could not comprehend how the girl could fail to recognize what was happening, why she didn't see the trap of that double entendre flattery, of the glass of champagne filled again and again, of the perfect red rose Matias pinned in her hair, all of it so predictable and vulgar that it nauseated him.

Line 5, Czech
Milan Kundera, *The Joke*

Then I imagined (since the mind, even when at rest, never stops playing its games) that I was a defenseless victim entirely at the mercy of the woman who has sharpened the razor. And because my body had dissolved in space and all I could feel was the touch of her fingers on my face, I imagined that the gentle hands holding (turning, stroking) my head did so as if it were unattached to my body, as if it existed independently and the sharp razor waiting on the nearby table were there merely to consummate that beautiful independence.

Line 6, English
Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*

Hereisthehouseitisgreenandwhiteithasareddooritisveryprettyhereisthefamilymotherfatherdickandjaneliveinthegreenandwhitehousetheyareveryhappy...

Line 7, Onondaga/Native American
Iroquois Book of Rites

Now, then, we say, we wipe away the tears, so that in peace you may look about you. And, further, we suppose there is an obstruction in your ears. Now, then, we remove the obstruction carefully from your hearing, so that we trust you will easily hear the words spoken. And also, we imagine there is an obstruction in your throat. Now, therefore, we say, we remove the obstruction, so that you may speak freely in our mutual greetings.

Line 8, English
Gertrude Stein, *Three Lives*

She was the American version of the English handsome girl. In her ideal Completeness she would have been aggressively determined, a trifle brutal and entirely impersonal; a woman of passions but not of emotions, capable of long sustained action.