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Hailstones and Halibut Bones

Adventures In Color

by Mary O'Neil
Like Acrobats on a High Trapeze,

The Colors pose and bend their knees

Twist and turn and leap and blend

Into shapes and feelings without end...
What is purple?

Time is purple

Just before night

When most people

Turn on the light

But if you don't it's

A beautiful sight.

Asters are purple,

There's purple ink,
Purple's more popular, than you think. It's sort of a great grandmother to pink.

There are purple shadows and purple veils, and some ladies purple their fingernails.

There's purple jam.
And purple jell

And a purple bruise

Next day will tell

Where you landed

When you fell

The purple feeling

Is rather put-out

The purple look is a

Definite pout.
But the purple sound

Is the loveliest thing

It's a violet opening

In the spring
What is gold?

Gold is a metal.

Gold is a ring.

Gold is a very beautiful thing.

Gold is the sunshine.

Light and thin.

Warm as a muffin.

On your skin.
Gold is the moon

Gold are the stars

Jupiter, Venus

Saturn, and Mars.

Gold is the color of Clover honey

Gold is a certain Kind of money.

Gold is alive
In a flickering fish
That lives its life
In a crystall dish.

Gold is the answer
To many a wish.

Gold is feeling
Like a king
It's like having the most
Of everything
Long time ago

I was told

Yellow's mother's name is gold.
What is Black?

Black is the night when there isn't a star.

And you can't tell by looking where you are.

Black is a pail of paving tar.

Black is jet.

And things you'd like to forget.

Black is a smokestack.
Black is a cat, a leopard, a raven, a high silk hat.

The sound of black is "Boom, Boom, Boom!" echoing in an empty room.

Black is kind. It covers up
The rundown street,

The broken cup.

Black is charcoal

And patio grill,

The soot spots on

The window sill.

Black is a feeling

Hard to explain

Like suffering but
Without the pain

Black is licorice

And patent leather shoes

Black is the print

In the news.

Black is beauty

In its deepest form

The darkest cloud

In a thunderstorm.
Think of what starlight

& ~
And lamplight would lack

&
Diamonds and fire flies

If they couldn't lean against

Black.
What is Brown?

Brown is the color of a country road.

Back of a turtle.

Back of a toad.

Brown is cinnamon.

And morning toast.

And the good smell of the Sunday roast.

Brown is the color of work.
and the sound of a river,

Brown is bronze and a bow

and a quiver.

Brown is the house

On the edge of town

Where the wind is tearing

The shingles down.

Brown is a freckle

Brown is a mole
Brown is the earth

When you dig a hole.

Brown is the hair

On many a head

Brown is chocolate

And gingerbread.

Brown is a feeling

You get inside

When wondering makes
Your mind grow wide.

Brown is a leather shoe

And a good glove

Brown is comfortable

As love.
What is blue?

Blue is the color of the sky

Without a cloud

Cool, distant, beautiful

And proud.

Blue is the quiet sea

And the eyes of some people,

And many agree

As they grow older and older
Blue is the scarf
Spring wears on her shoulder.

Blue is twilight,
Shadows on snow,

Blue is feeling
Way down low.

Blue is a heron,

A sapphire ring

You can smell blue
In many a thing;

Gentian and larkspur,

Forget-me-nots, too.

And if you listen

You can hear blue

In wind over water

And wherever flax blooms,

and when evening steps into

Lonely rooms.
Cold is blue;

Flame shot from a welding torch

Is too;

Hot, wild, screaming, blistering blue,

and on winter mornings

The dawns are blue.
What is Gray?

Gray is the color of an elephant.

And a mouse.

And a falling apart house.

It's fog and smog,

te fine print and lint,

It's hush and

The bubbling of oatmeal mush.

Tiredness and oysters
Both are gray,

Smoke swirls and grandmother curls.

So are some spring coats.

And nanny goats.

Eagles are gray

And a rainy day

The sad look of a slum

And chewing gum
Wood ash and linen crash.

Pussywillows are gray

In a velvety way.

Suits, shoes

And bad news,

Beggar's hats,

And alley cats

Skin of a mole

And a worn slipper sole
Content is gray

&

and sleepiness too

They were gray suede gloves

When they're touching you.
What is White?

White is a dove

And lily of the valley

And a puddle of milk

Spilled in an alley

A ship's sail

A kite's tail

A wedding veil

Hailstone and
Halibut bones

And some people's Telephones.

The hottest and most blinding light is white.

And breath is white.

When you blow it out on a frosty night.

White is the shining absence of all color.
Then absence is white

Out of touch

Out of sight.

White is marshmallow

And vanilla ice cream

And the part you can't remember

In a dream.

White is the sound

Of a light foot walking
White is a pair of Whispers talking.

White is the beautiful Broken lace

Of snowflakes falling

On your face.

You can smell white

In a country room

Toward the end of May
In the cherry bloom.
What is Orange?

Orange is a tiger lily,
a carrot,
a feather from a parrot,
a flame,
the wildest color
You can name.

Orange is a happy day
Saying good-bye

In a sunset that

Shocks the sky.

Orange is brave

Orange is bold

It's bittersweet

And marigold.

Orange is zip

Orange is dash
The brightest stripe in a Roman sash.

Orange is an orange.

Also a mango.

Orange is music.

Of the tango.

Orange is the fur.

Of the fiery fox.

The brightest crayon.
In the box.

And in the fall

When the leaves are turning

Orange is the smell

of a bonfire burning.
What is Red?

Red is a sunset & Blazy and bright.

Red is feeling brave With all your might.

Red is a sunburn Spot on your nose,

Sometime red Is a red, red rose.
Red  squiggles  out

When you cut your hand.

Red is a brick and

A rubber band.

Red is a hotness

You get inside

When you're embarrassed

And want to hide.

Fire-cracker, fire-engine
Fire-flicker red &
And when you're angry
Red runs through your head.
Red is an Indian,
A Valentine heart,
The trimming on
A circus cart.
Red is a lipstick,
Red is a shout
Red is a signal that says "Watch out!"

Red is a great big rubber ball.

Red is the giant-est color of all.

Red is a show-off.

No doubt about it.

But can you imagine...
Living without it?
What is Pink?

Pink is the color of a rose.

They come in other colors.

But everyone knows Pink is the mother-color of a rose.

Pink is a new baby.

The inside of a shell.

Pink a cooked shrimp &

And a canterbury bell.
Pink is peachbloom

&
Gauzy and frail

The wind's exquisite

Wedding veil.

Pink is a bon bon

Pink is a blush,

Some Easter bunnies

Are plush pink.

If you stand in an orchard
In the middle of Spring

And you don't make a sound

You can hear pink sing,

A darling, whispery Song of a thing.

Pink is the beautiful Little sister of red.

My teacher said,

And a ribbon girls tie
Round their heads.

Pink is the sash

With the lovely fold

You'll remember

When you're old.

Pink is the flower

On a lady's hat

That nods and bows

This way and that.
What is Green?

Green is the grass

And the leaves of trees

Green is the smell

Of a country breeze.

Green is lettuce

And sometimes the sea

When green is a feeling

You pronounce it N-V.
Green is a coolness
You get in the shade.
Of the tall old woods
Where the moss is made.
Green is a flutter
That comes in the Spring
when frost melts out
Of everything.
Green is a grasshopper
Green is jade

Green is hiding

In the shade

Green is an olive

And a pickle

The sound of green

Is a water trickle

Green is the world

After the rain
Bathed and beautiful

Again.

April is green

Peppermint, too.

Every elf has one green shoe.

Under a grape arbor

Air is green

With sprinkles of sunlight
In between.

Green is the meadow,

Green is the fuzz

That covers up

Where winter was.

Green is ivy and

Honeysuckle vine.

Green is yours

And Green is mine.
What is Yellow?

Yellow is the color of the sun.

The feeling of fun.

The yolk of an egg.

A duck's bill.

A canary bird.

And a daffodil.

Yellow's sweet corn.

Ripe oats.
Hummingbirds' little throats

Summer squash and Chinese silk.

The cream on top of Jersey milk and Dandelions and Daisy hearts

Custard pies and
Lemon tarts.

Yellow blinks on summer nights.

In the off and on of firefly.

Yellow's a topaz.

A candle flame.

Felicity's a yellow name.
Yellow's mimosa

And I guess,

Yellow's the color of

Happiness.
The Colors Live Between black & white

In a land that we know best by sight.

But knowing best isn't everything,

For colors dance & colors sing,

And colors laugh
And colors cry

Turn off the lights

And colors die,

And they make you feel

Every feeling there is

From the grumpiest grump

To the fizziest fizz.

And you and you and I

Know well
Each has a taste

And each has a smell

And each has a wonderful story to tell.