

Sample Pastiche for "The Last Song" by Joy Harjo

The Last Word

how can you stand it  
she said  
the cold wisconsin winters  
where you were born  
this frozen blue air  
is slicing my lungs  
and i want to go back  
to oregon

it is the only way  
i know to breathe  
a welcome hibernation  
that my family knew  
came out of their history  
buried in snow banks  
shoulder-high  
and i know no other way  
than to bury my toes  
in flannel and wool  
in the crisp north night air

wisconsin will be the last word  
i'll ever say

Sample Pastiche for "Once the World Was Perfect" by Joy Harjo

Once the school was perfect, and we were happy in that  
school.  
Then, we took it for granted.  
Disrespect began a small rumble in all the teenagers' minds.  
Then Ego pushed through with its disregard for everyone else.  
And once Ego took over the hallways,  
All manner of tormented thoughts  
Shoved through—  
We destroyed the school we had been given  
For education, for a future—  
Each cement block of selfishness, each block  
Of bullies, rumors, insecurities, and pain build walls that could not be destroyed.  
No one was without a cement block in his or her or their hand.  
There we were,  
Right back where we had promised we'd never be again.  
We were thrashing around inside those walls  
Desperate to get out of the prison we ourselves had created.  
And now we had no place to hide, since we didn't know  
If the walls were built to keep us in or others out.  
Then one of the humble ones took a chance and  
Decided to be vulnerable.  
A whisper of honesty and self-reflection turned to a hushed hum.  
The hum turned into a roar that could be heard through the concrete walls.  
Everyone worked together to knock down the barriers between them.  
A freshman climbed out first into the empty hallways,  
And then, the sophomores, the juniors, the seniors  
And all the way through time—  
To now, into this florescent morning light, to you.