

Name:

Date:

Parody: Mini Lesson



Episode 354:

Mistakes Were Made

Act 2:

You're Willing to Sacrifice Your Love

Ira Glass

Now this is a poem that is often imitated?

Sean Cole

Imitated. Spoofed. By many a poet. It's kind of become a game among poets, to write a version of "This Is Just to Say." My favorite one is by a poet named Kenneth Koch.

Ira Glass

OK, let's hear him.

Sean Cole

"I chopped down the house that you had been saving to live in next summer. I am sorry, but it was morning, and I had nothing to do. And its wooden beams were so inviting."

"Last evening we went dancing, and I broke your leg. Forgive me. I was clumsy, and I wanted you here in the wards, where I am the doctor."

Ira Glass

That story has everything, that last one.

Sean Cole

It really does. It's an entire novel in three lines.

Ira Glass

Now I understand that when you type the title of this poem into the internet, one finds all sorts of other ones.

Sean Cole

When you type in “This Is Just to Say” in quotes and “spoof.”

Ira Glass

And I did find this one, by somebody named Jason Nicolas, “This Is Just to Say.”
“I have pulled the pin from the grenade on the desk. Forgive me, I thought it was my key ring and—”

Sean Cole

I love that one. This is an actual submission to a Harry Potter fan fiction contest. It's by Tom Phillips, and it's “Dumbledore's Death in the Style of William Carlos Williams.”

“This is just to say I have killed the wizard that was in your novels, and whose death you were probably saving for book seven. Forgive me. He had it coming. So beardy, and so old.”

Ira Glass

So my favorite of all the variations on this is written by a student named Andrew, maybe it's pronounced Vech-ee-oh-nay?

Sean Cole

Veck-ee-oh-nay maybe.

Ira Glass

Veck-ee-oh-nay maybe. And could I ask you to read that? It's called "Sorry, But It Was Beautiful."

Sean Cole

"Sorry I took your money and burned it. But it looked like the world falling apart when it crackled and burned. So I think it was worth it. After all, you can't see the world fall apart every day."

Ira Glass

We asked some of our regular contributors to do their own variations on the poem. Here they are.

Starlee Kine

"This Is Just to Say," by Starlee Kine. One, I chose the other girl. I'm sorry. It's not just that I'm more attracted to her. It's also that she is more interesting. Two, I used your dog as an excuse to pick up girls at the dog park, which is especially tacky since I'm your boyfriend. Please forgive me. I'm really bad at being in a relationship, and I'm pretty sure I told you that when we first got together.

Jonathan Goldstein

"This Is Just to Say," by Jonathan Goldstein. This is just to say I have eaten the fruit of knowledge, but nothing happened. Not a word. No lightning or volcanoes, not even a drop of rain. So I was just wondering, are you there?

Heather O'Neill

"This Is Just to Say," by Heather O'Neill. Dear Mom, This is just to say I forgive you for eating all the plums, the apples, the pears, and even drinking the last of the orange juice. I forgive you for emptying Dad's bank account and for painting stars on our station wagon right before you got in and drove away. I forgive you for leaving us without even saying good-bye. Your plans were always so sweet, so delicious, and so cold.

Name:

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Parody: Independent Work

Directions: Using the resources listed below, try your hand at a "This Is Just to Say" parody! You may choose to write from a). your own personal perspective, or b). someone (or something) else's. I encourage you to follow William Carlos Williams' structure, but have fun with it and make it your own!

Resources: **Parody: Entrance Ticket**

Parody: Mini Lesson

Your creativity 😊

This Is Just to Say
