

## Poetry of My Life

By Otto Brown

Welcome, reader, to my anthology.

The theme for this collection of poems is me. All of the poems relate to me in some way: my mother read them to me as a child, I recited them for school projects, or I found them through my own curiosity for poetry. The first poem that I remember my mother reciting to me was "Who Has Seen the Wind?" by Christina Rossetti, which is why this poem comes first. My mother and I would sit on the couch at home and look out the window at the wind blowing the trees, and she would begin by saying, "who has seen the wind?," to which I would reply, "neither I nor you." The order of this anthology follows the order in which these poems are imprinted in my memory. This is why "Penny Lane" by The Beatles comes next. My parents and I would always listen to the Beatles' album "1" on our trips to and from Wisconsin. I remember us all singing and laughing together, enjoying each other's company. The next two poems both come from Robert Frost, and that is no accident. Robert Frost was a very influential poet in my mother's life, and she made sure that he was influential in mine as well. To this day, I can recite both "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" and "The Road Not Taken." Whenever my mom and I would see snow, falling lightly at night, we would go outside and walk around our neighborhood, taking in the tranquility that comes from delicate snow falling. My mother would say the second of these poems, "The Road Not Taken," to me before I went to bed, especially after a difficult day or week.

The fifth poem in this anthology is "The Tree That Time Built" by Mary Ann Hoberman. This poem was one of the first that I found on my own, probably when I was in second grade. Her book, entitled "The Tree That Time Built" is an anthology of poems that relate to nature. During her visit to the University of Chicago, I was able to purchase a copy of the book, and have Ms. Hoberman sign it for, it turned out to be, the first time! Her exact note says, "This is the first time I've signed this book, Otto Bob! --MAH."

The next two poems are from Carl Sandburg. I came across Sandburg's poem "Chicago" while researching this history of Chicago in Humanities in seventh grade. His description of Chicago during the early 1900s helped me to see my city in a different light. His poem "Grass" had a similar effect. After learning reading "All Quiet on the Western Front" in eighth grade Humanities, reading "Grass" allowed me to reflect on the effects and destruction of war in a different way. This was the first poem that made me realize the deep effect that poetry can have on my life.

The eighth and ninth poems of this anthology are the works of Maya Angelou. For eighth grade Humanities, we had to memorize and recite a poem with emotion and diction and without missing a single word. I chose to memorize and recite "Caged Bird" by Maya Angelou. I spent weeks

memorizing the poem, and, if asked, I could probably still recite it with only a few errors. The second poem by Angelou, titled "Still I Rise" was a poem I discovered only recently, and found to be inspiring and written with perseverance in mind. After learning about Maya Angelou's childhood and early part of her life, I realized how much weight this poem carried, and I found it to be uplifting and truly inspiring.

The final poem of this anthology is "Here's to the Crazy Ones" by Rob Siltanen. This poem is unlike any of the others in that it was written for an Apple commercial that aired in 1997. The commercial was part of the "Think Different" campaign that reinvented Apple when Steve Jobs returned to the company after being forced out in 1985. This poem is one of the most influential pieces of writing that I've read in my life, and I think that the message that it conveys is completely accurate: "...the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do."

I hope you enjoy this anthology, and I hope that you are moved, just as I have been, by these incredible literary works. Cheers!

## **"Who Has Seen the Wind?" by Christina Rossetti**

Who has seen the wind?  
Neither I nor you:  
But when the leaves hang trembling,  
The wind is passing through.

Who has seen the wind?  
Neither you nor I:  
But when the trees bow down their heads,  
The wind is passing by.

From <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/>

*Explain the theme (the author's message) of the poem.*

Christina Rossetti's "Who Has Seen the Wind" is like a Pixar movie: kids love it for the story, and parents like it for its maturity. The simple topic of wind blowing through trees is something that can be appreciated by a child of almost any age - the topic is easy to grasp. When read by adults, however, there are other connotations that go beyond just the wind. "Seen" can be interpreted to mean "understood," and "wind" can be interpreted to mean "perceptible natural movement of air." Together, the first line becomes "who has understood the perceptible natural movement of air?" This is significant because it takes the poem to a new level of complexity that has deeper meaning for those capable of understanding past the simple definitions. The wind can represent a supernatural force, like Mother Nature. In the second stanza, Rossetti says, "...when the trees bow down their heads..." which implies that the trees and nature respect this natural force. In this sense, this poem has two meanings: the literal meaning for children, and the more figurative meaning for adults.

## "Penny Lane" by The Beatles

[Verse 1]

Penny Lane there is a barber showing  
photographs  
Of every head he's had the pleasure to have  
known  
And all the people that come and go  
Stop and say hello

[Verse 2]

On the corner is a banker with a motorcar  
The little children laugh at him behind his back  
And the banker never wears a mac  
In the pouring rain  
Very strange

[Chorus]

Penny Lane is in my ears and in my eyes  
There beneath the blue suburban skies  
I sit, and meanwhile back

[Verse 3]

In Penny Lane there is a fireman with an  
hourglass  
And in his pocket is a portrait of the Queen  
He likes to keep his fire engine clean  
It's a clean machine

[Bridge]

Penny Lane is in my ears and in my eyes  
A four of fish and finger pies  
In summer meanwhile back

[Verse 4]

Behind the shelter in the middle of a  
roundabout  
A pretty nurse is selling poppies from a tray  
And though she feels as if she's in a play  
She is anyway

[Verse 5]

Penny Lane the barber shaves another  
customer  
We see the banker sitting waiting for a trim  
Then the fireman rushes in  
From the pouring rain  
Very strange

[Chorus]

Penny Lane is in my ears and in my eyes  
There beneath the blue suburban skies  
I sit, and meanwhile back

[Outro]

Penny Lane is in my ears and in my eyes  
There beneath the blue suburban skies  
Penny Lane

From <https://genius.com>

## "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" by Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer  
To stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound's the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.

From <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/>

*Analyze an image in the poem.*

In "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," the reader can experience exactly what Robert Frost wants them to: the experience of being isolated with oneself in the woods during a beautiful snowfall. Standing in the woods with only a horse, the person experiencing this breathtaking natural event will get the chills to run down his or her back because of the simplistic beauty. When Frost describes the woods as "lovely, dark and deep," the image of a an intimidating yet beautiful place emerges. This reminds me of when I was a little kid, in a woods near my home in Wisconsin during a similar snowstorm. I stood in the middle it, turning around while staring up at the sky. There's

something special about snowfall in rural areas, while everything around you is silent as snowflakes land on your nose and melt immediately. Standing in the woods during an event like this causes a person to stay still, reflect, and center themselves. In that time and place, nothing else matters but you and your own thoughts. After all, nature is the best medicine.

## "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

From <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/>

**"The Tree That Time Built" by Mary Ann Hoberman**

Do not fret  
And do not doubt.  
You are in time.  
You can't fall out.

No matter what  
You say or do,  
You are in time.  
Time is in you.

And everything  
That is to be  
Will be in time  
Upon this tree.

From The Tree That Time Built by Mary Ann Hoberman



## "Chicago" by Carl Sandburg

Hog Butcher for the World,  
Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,  
Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight Handler;  
Stormy, husky, brawling,  
City of the Big Shoulders:

They tell me you are wicked and I believe them, for I have seen your painted women under the gas lamps luring the farm boys.

And they tell me you are crooked and I answer: Yes, it is true I have seen the gunman kill and go \ free to kill again.

And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is: On the faces of women and children I have seen the marks of wanton hunger.

And having answered so I turn once more to those who sneer at this my city, and I give them back the sneer and say to them:

Come and show me another city with lifted head singing so proud to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning.

Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on job, here is a tall bold slugger set vivid against the little soft cities;

Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action, cunning as a savage pitted against the wilderness,

Bareheaded,

Shoveling,

Wrecking,

Planning,

Building, breaking, rebuilding,

Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth, laughing with white teeth,

Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing as a young man laughs,

Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has never lost a battle,

Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is the pulse, and under his ribs the heart of the people,

Laughing!

Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling laughter of Youth, half-naked, sweating, proud to be Hog Butcher, Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat, Player with Railroads and Freight Handler to the Nation.

From <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/>

**"Grass" by Carl Sandburg**

Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo.

Shovel them under and let me work—

I am the grass; I cover all.

And pile them high at Gettysburg

And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.

Shovel them under and let me work.

Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor:

What place is this?

Where are we now?

I am the grass.

Let me work.

From <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/>

## "Caged Bird" by Maya Angelou

<p>A free bird leaps on the back of the wind and floats downstream till the current ends and dips his wing in the orange sun rays and dares to claim the sky.</p> <p>But a bird that stalks down his narrow cage can seldom see through his bars of rage his wings are clipped and his feet are tied so he opens his throat to sing.</p> <p>The caged bird sings with a fearful trill of things unknown but longed for still and his tune is heard on the distant hill for the caged bird sings of freedom.</p>	<p>The free bird thinks of another breeze and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees and the fat worms waiting on a dawn bright lawn and he names the sky his own</p> <p>But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream his wings are clipped and his feet are tied so he opens his throat to sing.</p> <p>The caged bird sings with a fearful trill of things unknown but longed for still and his tune is heard on the distant hill for the caged bird sings of freedom.</p> <p>From <a href="https://www.poetryfoundation.org/">https://www.poetryfoundation.org/</a></p>
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*Explain the theme (the author's message) of the poem.*

Angelou's language contrasts from stanza to stanza. For example, in the first stanza, she uses light language, such as "floats," "dips his wing," and "orange sun rays." This language rolls off the tongue and allows for the reader to use a playful tone. However, in the second stanza, Angelou uses heavy language, like "narrow cage," "bars of rage," and "wings are clipped." This language makes the reader use a sharper tone that cuts through the air when he/she reads the poem aloud. This pattern

continues throughout the poem, going from light to heavy, and then being followed by a hopeful stanza that incorporates elements of the light and heavy stanzas. Stanzas 1 and 4 incorporate light language; stanzas 2 and 5 use heavy language; and stanzas 3 and 6 are so-called crossover stanzas which incorporate both light and heavy language and are repeated twice. In doing this, Angelou paints the picture of a conflicted person—one who is joyful, pessimistic, and hopeful. By juxtaposing these images together, Angelou speaks to human emotions and the different cycles that a person's emotions go through, in addition to the poem acting as a metaphor for race. In her autobiography titled "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," Angelou discusses race and racism that she experienced in her own life. This poem also extends that experience by using the free bird and the caged bird as metaphors for whites and African-Americans in America. The free bird is free to move about and do whatever it wants, while the caged bird is severely limited in its actions. By using birds as a metaphor, Angelou speaks to a world full of inequality and conflicted emotions.

**"Still I Rise" by Maya Angelou**

You may write me down in history  
With your bitter, twisted lies,  
You may trod me in the very dirt  
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?  
Why are you beset with gloom?  
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells  
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,  
With the certainty of tides,  
Just like hopes springing high,  
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?  
Bowed head and lowered eyes?  
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,  
Weakened by my soulful cries?

Does my haughtiness offend you?  
Don't you take it awful hard  
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines  
Diggin' in my own backyard.

You may shoot me with your words,  
You may cut me with your eyes,  
You may kill me with your hatefulness,  
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?  
Does it come as a surprise  
That I dance like I've got diamonds  
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame  
I rise  
Up from a past that's rooted in pain  
I rise  
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,  
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear  
I rise  
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear  
I rise  
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,  
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.  
I rise  
I rise  
I rise.

From <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/>

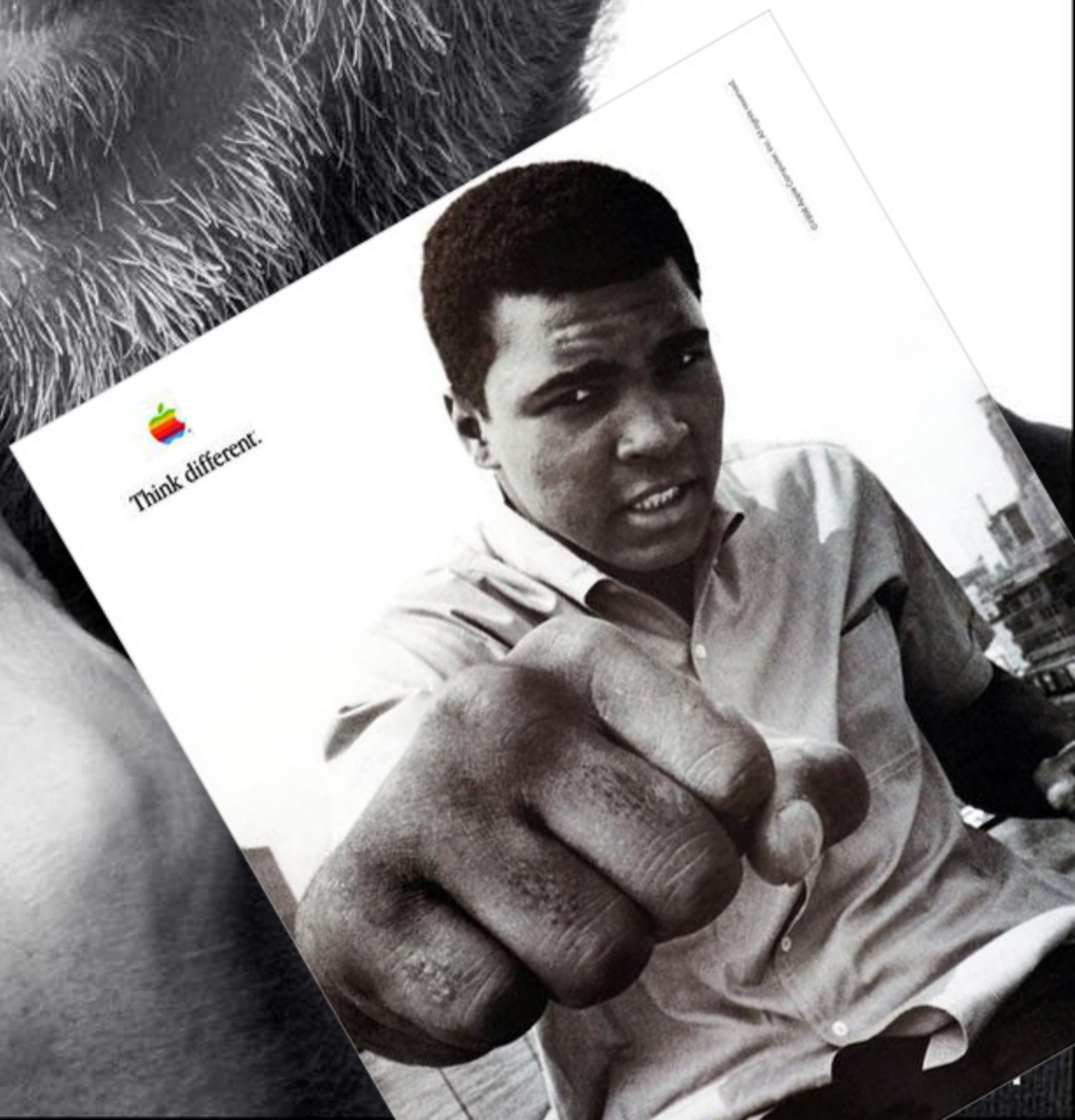
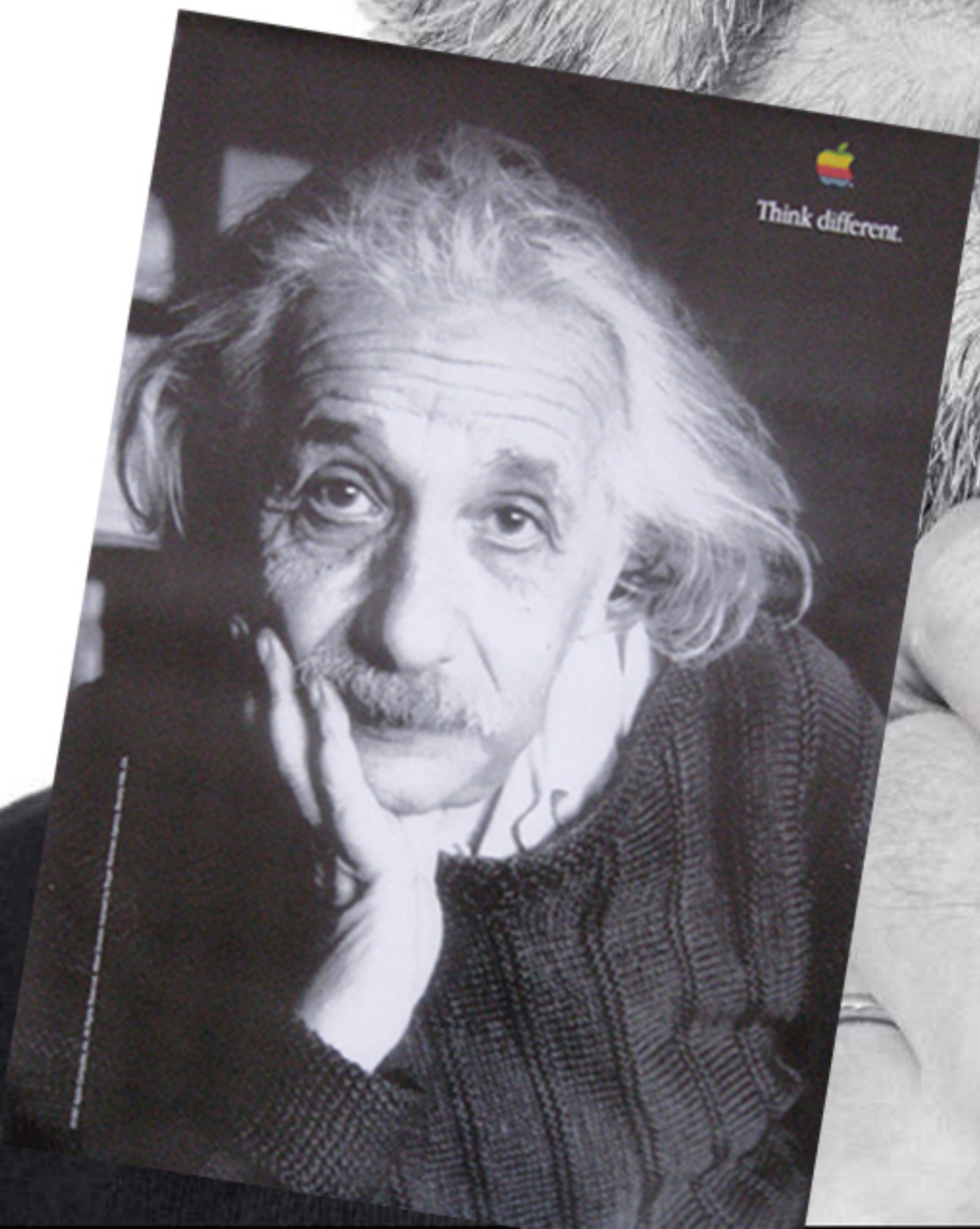
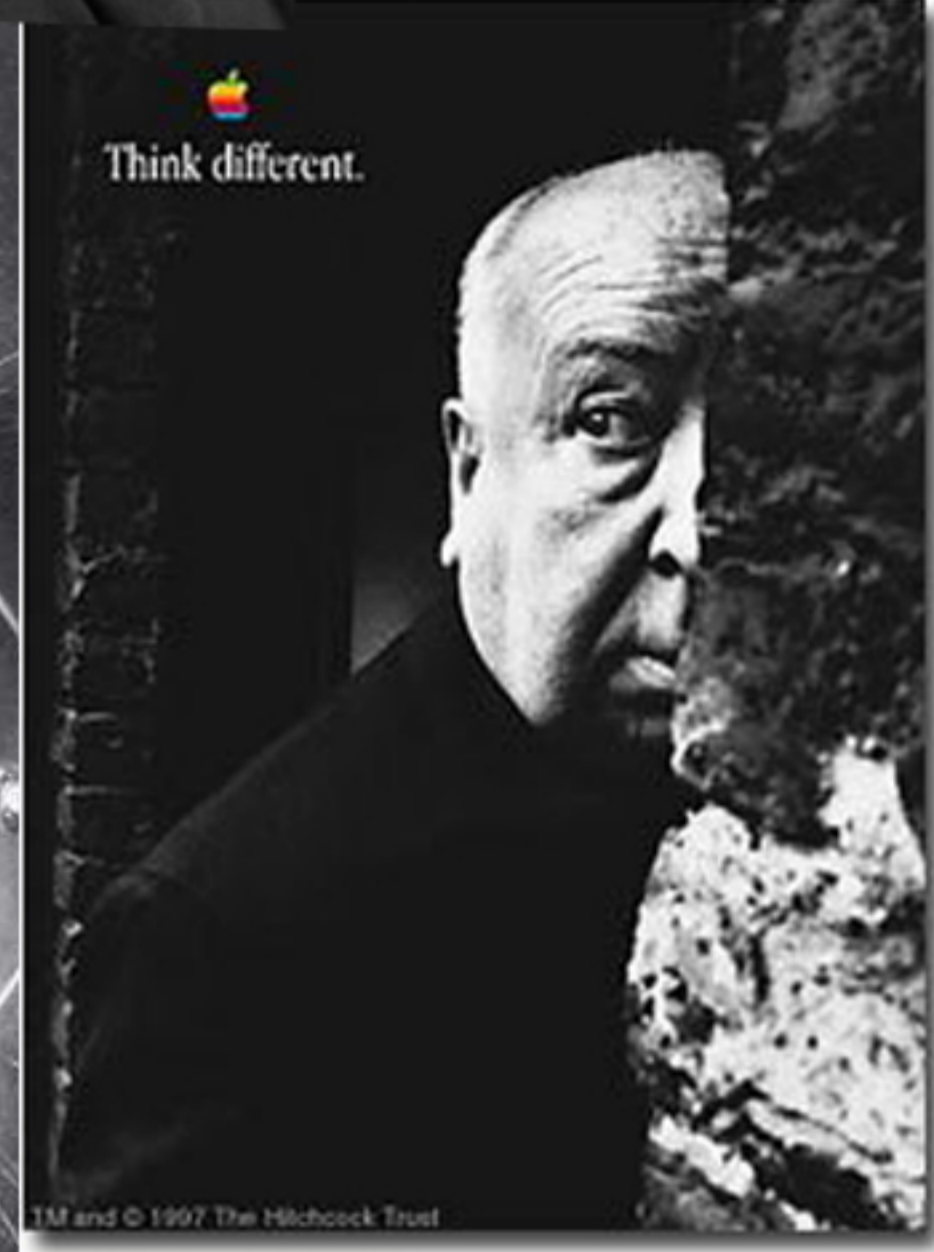
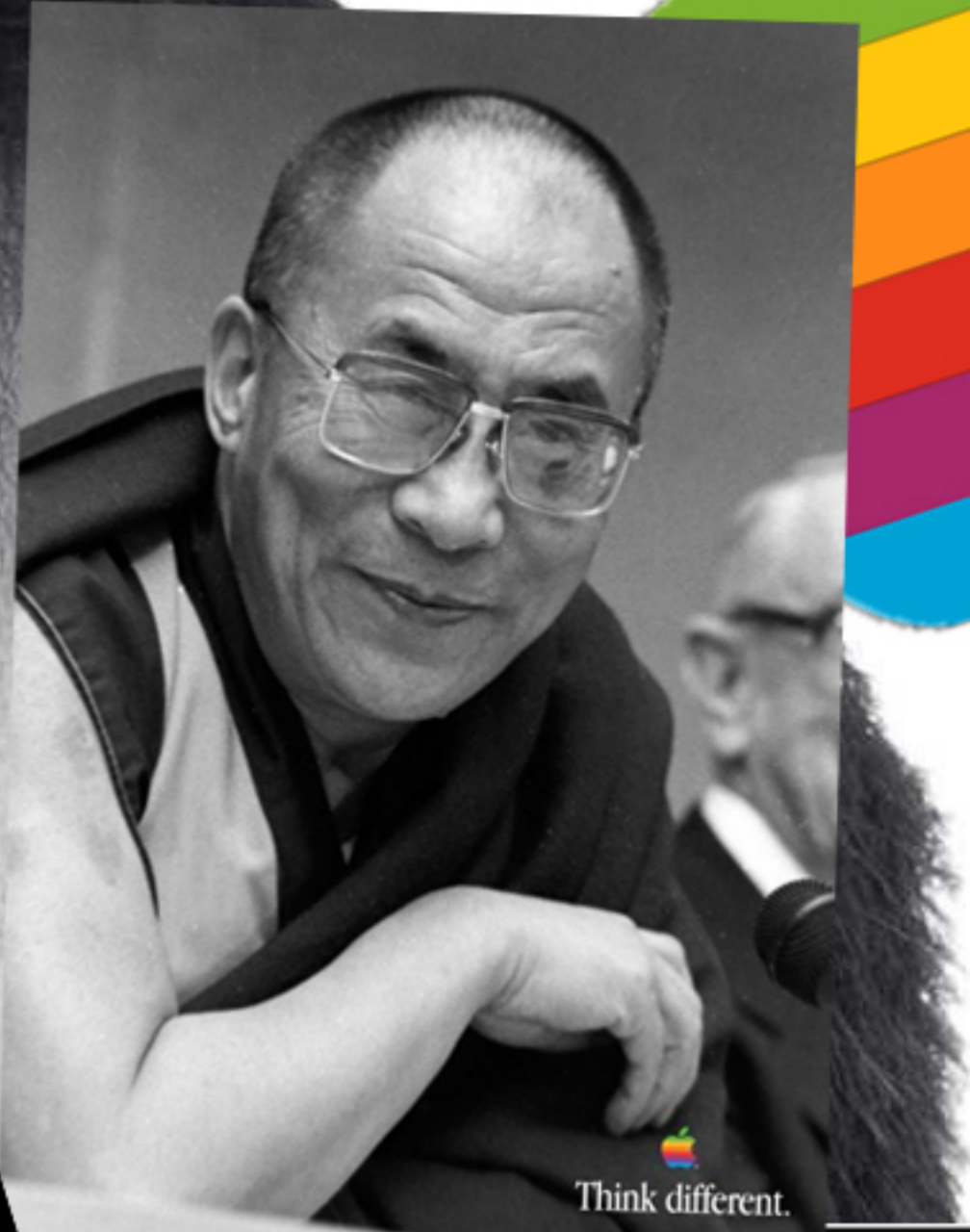
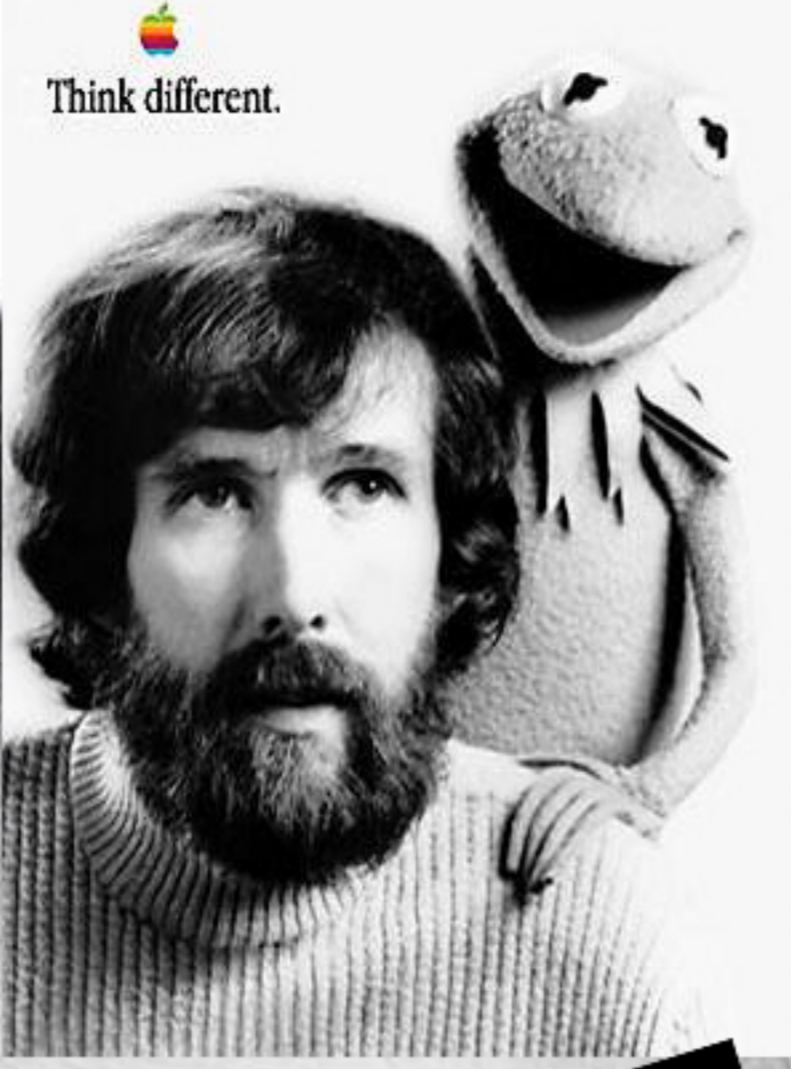
## **"Here's to the Crazy Ones" by Rob Siltanen**

Here's to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rules. And they have no respect for the status quo. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them. About the only thing you can't do is ignore them. Because they change things. They push the human race forward. And while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius. Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do.

From <https://www.goodreads.com/>

# Steve Jobs by Walter Isaacson

Otto Brown



Think different

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