Insects in Literature: Poetry

Guillaume Apollinaire: "The Caterpillar"
________: "The Fly"
________: "The Flea"
________: "The Grasshopper"
   All are from Bestiary, or the Parade of Orpheus

William Blake: "The Fly"

Robert Burns: "To a Louse"

Charles Bukowski: "40,000 Flies"

Emily Dickinson: "From Cocoon Forth a Butterfly"
________: "Two Butterflies Went Out at Noon"
________: "The Spider as an Artist"
________: "Death is Like the Insect"

Ralph Waldo Emerson: "The Humble-Bee"

Robert Fitzgerald: "Himeros"
________: "Song for September"

Robert Frost: "A Considerable Speck"
The Epic of Gilgamesh

The *Gilgamesh* includes at least two references to arthropods: the so-called "scorpion men," and dragonflies, the latter of which is discussed here. The passages occur near the beginning of Tablet IX and the very end of Tablet X, respectively, in the Temple translation (linked above).

Thom Gunn: “Arachne”

Hermann Hesse: “A Swarm of Gnats”

_______: “Lying in Grass”

Homer: *Iliad*

A number of Homeric similes use insects as the focus of their imagery. Some of the more interesting are within the *Iliad* 12:149-172, 16:257-274 and 16:632-657.

Hsu Chao: "The Locust Swarm"*

Ted Hughes: “Gnat-Psalm”

_______: “A Cranefly in September”

_______: Two Tortoiseshell Butterflies”

_______: “The Honey Bee”

_______: “In the Likeness of a Grasshopper”

John Keats: "On the Grasshopper and Cricket"

_______: "To Autumn"
Federico García Lorca: "The Little Mute Boy"

Antonio Machado: "Flies"

Pablo Neruda: "Fleas Interest Me So Much"
-------------: "Life and Death of a Butterfly"
-------------: "Ode to Bees"

Elise Partridge: " Caught"

Octavio Paz: "Obsidian Butterfly"
-------------: "Stars and Cricket"

Petrarch: "Canzoniere 141"

Salvatore Quasimodo: "An Evening, the Snow"
-------------: "Often a Riviera"
-------------: Dead Heron

Kenneth Rexroth: "Ant" (From Bestiary)

**Riddle 47 of The Exeter Book**

Apparently, the generally agreed-on solution by scholars is "Bookworm." I can't find a modern translation from the Old English on the Web, but the first line is rendered, "A moth ate words."
Dylan Thomas: "To-Day, This Insect"

Tristan Tzara: "Springtime"

Cesar Vallejo: "The Spider"

William Wordsworth: "To a Butterfly"

James Wright: "The First Days"
You'll need to scroll down about three-quarters of the page in order to find this particular poem. I suspect that Wright was observing a large hornet, such as *Vespa crabro*, rather than a bee. And, of course, "His" should be "Her," but now I'm quibbling.

William Butler Yeats: "Another Song of a Fool"