



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
POETRY RECITATION COMPETITION



POETRY OUT LOUD



Mahsati 41
Venue: Marble Hall
24 December, 2019
15:00



Maya Angelou

Africa

Recited by Aysun Mamedova



Maya Angelou's "Africa" is an exceptional poem that talks about the injustices faced by the Blacks during the 18th century. Personification and rhythm enhance both the imagery and tone of the poem. The entire poem is a metaphor of Africa as a beautiful woman.

Thus she had lain
sugar cane sweet
deserts her hair
golden her feet
mountains her breasts
two Niles her tears.
Thus she has lain
Black through the years.
Over the white seas
Rime white and cold
Brigands ungentled
icicle bold
took her daughters
Sold her strong sons
churched her with Jesus
bled her with guns
Thus she has lain.
Now she is rising
remember her pain
remember her losses
her screams loud and vain
remember her riches
her history slain
now she is striding
although she had lain



Pablo Neruda

A fragment from **If You Forget Me**

Recited by Aytaj Allahverdiyeva



This poem was written while Pablo Neruda was in exile from Chile, during which time he was also having an affair with Matilde Urrutia. It is presumed the poem was written with Matilde in mind, perhaps while she was in his presence. This poem shows how when an individual consumes your thoughts, everything you see, hear, touch, or experience reminds you of that person.

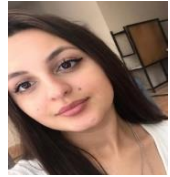
I want you to know
one thing.
You know how this is:
if I look
at the crystal moon, at the red branch
of the slow autumn at my window,
if I touch
near the fire
the impalpable ash
or the wrinkled body of the log,
everything carries me to you,
as if everything that exists,
aromas, light, metals,
were little boats
that sail
toward those isles of yours that wait for me.
Well, now,
if little by little you stop loving me
I shall stop loving you little by little.
If suddenly
you forget me
do not look for me,
for I shall already have forgotten you.



William Shakespeare

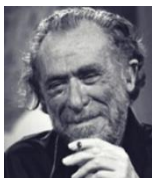
Sonnet 138

Recited by Aytaj Huseynli



In Sonnet 138 the poet candidly reveals both the nature of his relationship with the dark lady and the insecurities he has about growing older.

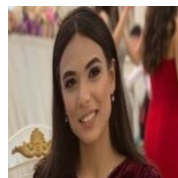
When my love swears that she is made of truth,
I do believe her, though I know she lies,
That she might think me some untutored youth,
Unlearnèd in the world's false subtleties.
Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,
Although she knows my days are past the best,
Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue:
On both sides thus is simple truth suppressed.
But wherefore says she not she is unjust?
And wherefore say not I that I am old?
Oh, love's best habit is in seeming trust,
And age in love loves not to have years told.
Therefore I lie with her and she with me,
And in our faults by lies we flattered be.



Charles Bukowski

A Smile To Remember

Recited by Aitaj Ramazanzada



"A Smile To Remember" is a narrative poem. The poet has used paradoxes in this poem to express his thoughts about a home where the mother gets beaten by the father atleast thrice a week, yet she smiles and asks the son to smile and be happy too.

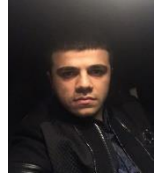
we had goldfish and they circled around and around
in the bowl on the table near the heavy drapes
covering the picture window and
my mother, always smiling, wanting us all
to be happy, told me, 'be happy Henry!'
and she was right: it's better to be happy if you
can
but my father continued to beat her and me several times a week
while
raging inside his 6-foot-two frame because he couldn't
understand what was attacking him from within.
my mother, poor fish,
wanting to be happy, beaten two or three times a
week, telling me to be happy: 'Henry, smile!
why don't you ever smile?'
and then she would smile, to show me how, and it was the
saddest smile I ever saw
one day the goldfish died, all five of them,
they floated on the water, on their sides, their
eyes still open,
and when my father got home he threw them to the cat
there on the kitchen floor and we watched as my mother
smiled



William Shakespeare

Sonnet I

Recited by Emil Ellezov



Sonnet 1 serves as being a kind of introduction to the rest of the sonnets, and may have been written later than the ones that follow. The "procreation sonnets" (sonnets 1 – 17) urge this youth to not waste his beauty by failing to marry or reproduce.

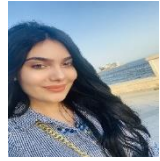
From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
But as the ripper should by time decease,
His tender heir might bear his memory:
But thou contracted to thine own bright eyes,
Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,
Making a famine where abundance lies,
Thy self thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel:
Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament,
And only herald to the gaudy spring,
Within thine own bud buriest thy content,
And, tender churl, mak'st waste in niggarding:
Pity the world, or else this glutton be,
To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee.



Robert Frost

The Road Not Taken

Recited by Elnara Aliyeva



"The Road Not Taken" is a narrative poem. It reads naturally or conversationally and begins as a kind of photographic depiction of a quiet moment in woods. Some have said that it is one of his most misunderstood poems, claiming that it is not simply a poem that champions the idea of "following your own path", but that the poem, they suggest, expresses some irony regarding that idea.

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 marked 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.



William Shakespeare

Sonnet LXVI

Recited by Elnura Suleymanova



The speaker criticizes three things: general unfairness of life, societal immorality, and oppressive government. The mood of Sonnet 66 does not change until the last line, when the speaker declares that the only thing keeping him alive is his lover.

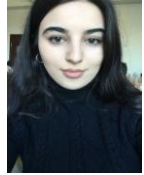
Tired with all these, for restful death I cry,
As to behold desert a beggar born,
And needy nothing trimmed in jollity,
And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
And gilded honor shamefully misplaced,
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,
And strength by limping sway disablèd,
And art made tongue-tied by authority,
And folly, doctor-like, controlling skill,
And simple truth miscalled simplicity,
And captive good attending captain ill.
Tired with all these, from these would I be gone,
Save that to die, I leave my love alone.



William Shakespeare

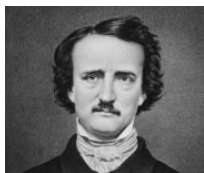
Sonnet CXXVII

Recited by Farida Sadigova



In Sonnet 127 the speaker discusses the way blackness and darkness have been viewed. In times past, black was not considered beautiful ("not counted fair"), or if it was, it was not called as such. The speaker says that he has chosen a mistress whose eyes are black and seem to be in mourning for those who use makeup to falsely disguise their natural looks. Her black eyes look so suited to mourning that everyone says that's the way beauty should look.

In the old age black was not counted fair,
Or if it were, it bore not beauty's name;
But now is black beauty's successive heir,
And beauty slandered with a bastard shame:
For since each hand hath put on Nature's power,
Fairing the foul with Art's false borrowed face,
Sweet beauty hath no name, no holy bower,
But is profaned, if not lives in disgrace.
Therefore my mistress' eyes are raven black,
Her eyes so suited, and they mourners seem
At such who, not born fair, no beauty lack,
Sland'ring creation with a false esteem:
Yet so they mourn becoming of their woe,
That every tongue says beauty should look so.



Edgar Allan Poe

Alone

Recited by Fidan Isbarova



Edgar Allan Poe's (1809-1849) stature as a major figure in world literature is primarily based on his ingenious and profound short stories, poems, and critical theories, which established a highly influential rationale for the short form in both poetry and fiction.

From childhood's hour I have not been
As others were—I have not seen
As others saw—I could not bring
My passions from a common spring—
From the same source I have not taken
My sorrow—I could not awaken
My heart to joy at the same tone—
And all I lov'd—I lov'd alone—
Then—in my childhood—in the dawn
Of a most stormy life—was drawn
From ev'ry depth of good and ill
The mystery which binds me still—
From the torrent, or the fountain—
From the red cliff of the mountain—
From the sun that 'round me roll'd
In its autumn tint of gold—
From the lightning in the sky
As it pass'd me flying by—
From the thunder, and the storm—
And the cloud that took the form
(When the rest of Heaven was blue)
Of a demon in my view—



Amy Lowell



The Garden by Moonlight

Recited by Fidan Zeynalova

“*The Garden by Moonlight*” by Amy Lowell describes a garden under the light of the moon, as well as the flowers, animals and insects one can see, and the finality of death.

A black cat among roses,
Phlox, lilac-misted under a first-quarter moon,
The sweet smells of heliotrope and night-scented stock.
The garden is very still,
It is dazed with moonlight,
Contented with perfume,
Dreaming the opium dreams of its folded poppies.
Firefly lights open and vanish
High as the tip buds of the golden glow
Low as the sweet alyssum flowers at my feet.
Moon-shimmer on leaves and trellises,
Moon-spikes shafting through the snow ball bush.
Only the little faces of the ladies’ delight are alert and staring,
Only the cat, padding between the roses,
Shakes a branch and breaks the chequered pattern
As water is broken by the falling of a leaf.
Then you come,
And you are quiet like the garden,
And white like the alyssum flowers,
And beautiful as the silent sparks of the fireflies.
Ah, Beloved, do you see those orange lilies?
They knew my mother,
But who belonging to me will they know
When I am gone.



Edward Estlin Cummings

**I Carry Your Heart With Me
(I Carry It In)**

Recited by Gulshan Mikayilova



Edward Estlin (E.E.) Cummings (1894-1962) was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts. His earliest poems were published in *Eight Harvard Poets* (1917). As one of the most innovative poets of his time, he experimented with poetic form and language to create a distinct personal style.

I carry your heart with me (I carry it in
My heart) I am never without it (anywhere
I go you go, my dear; and whatever is done
By only me is your doing, my darling)

I fear

No fate (for you are my fate, my sweet) I want
No world (for beautiful you are my world, my true)
And it's you are whatever a moon has always meant
And whatever a sun will always sing is you

Here is the deepest secret nobody knows
(Here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud
And the sky of the sky of a tree called life; which grows
Higher than soul can hope or mind can hide)
And this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart

I carry your heart (I carry it in my heart)



William Shakespeare

Good name

(From “Othello” act III)

Recited by Gunay Allahverdiyeva



In this scene, Iago begins to poison Othello’s mind into believing that Desdemona is having an affair with Cassio. At first, Othello cannot believe that Desdemona would behave in such a way, but slowly Iago makes suggestions that get into Othello’s imagination and he begins to believe it could be true.

Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls:
Who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.

Oh, beware, my lord, of jealousy!
It's the green-eyed monster which doth mock
The meat it feeds on. That cuckold lives in bliss
Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger
But, oh, what damnèd minutes tells he o'er
Who dotes, yet doubts— suspects, yet soundly loves!



William Shakespeare

Sonnet 18

Recited by Gunel Hashimli



Sonnet 18 was written in the 1590s, though it was not published until 1609. Like many of Shakespeare's sonnets, the poem wrestles with the nature of beauty and with the capacity of poetry to represent that beauty. Praising an anonymous person (usually believed to be a young man), the poem tries out a number of clichéd metaphors and similes, and finds each of them wanting.

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date;
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.



Jenny Joseph

Warning

Recited by Gular Hasanzada



“Warning” by Jenny Joseph describes what the future has in store as one ages and throws off societal restraints and expectations.

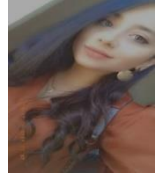
When I am an old woman I shall wear purple
With a red hat which doesn't go, and doesn't suit me.
And I shall spend my pension on brandy and summer gloves
And satin sandals, and say we've no money for butter.
I shall sit down on the pavement when I'm tired
And gobble up samples in shops and press alarm bells
And run my stick along the public railings
And make up for the sobriety of my youth.
I shall go out in my slippers in the rain
And pick flowers in other people's gardens
And learn to spit.
You can wear terrible shirts and grow more fat
And eat three pounds of sausages at a go
Or only bread and pickle for a week
And hoard pens and pencils and beer mats and things in boxes.
But now we must have clothes that keep us dry
And pay our rent and not swear in the street
And set a good example for the children.
We must have friends to dinner and read the papers.
But maybe I ought to practise a little now?
So people who know me are not too shocked and surprised
When suddenly I am old, and start to wear purple.



William Shakespeare

Sonnet 130

Recited by Khanim Taghizada



In “Sonnet 130,” the speaker unfavorably compares his lover's body to a series of beautiful things (implying that she is less beautiful than the sun, snow, roses, a goddess, etc.). Ultimately, the speaker concludes that, even if his mistress cannot be credibly compared to the typical imagery of love poems, his love is still real and valuable, and his mistress is still beautiful.

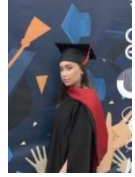
My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
I grant I never saw a goddess go;
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground.
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.



Langston Hughes

As I Grew Older

Recited by Khayala Abbasova



Langston Hughes wrote about dreams, inequality, and oppression in his imagery poems. He was considered to be the best of the Harlem Renaissance poets. Hughes' theme spans several poems: never give up; fight to have equality in an unjust society; and always keep hope in a person's heart.

It was a long time ago.
I have almost forgotten my
 dream.
But it was there then,
 In front of me,
 Bright like a sun
 My dream.
And then the wall rose,
 Rose slowly,
 Slowly,
Between me and my dream.
Rose until it touched the
 sky—
 The wall.
 Shadow.
 I am black.
I lie down in the shadow.

No longer the light of my
dream before me,
 Above me.
Only the thick wall.
Only the shadow.
 My hands!
 My dark hands!
Break through the wall!
 Find my dream!
Help me to shatter this
 darkness,
 To smash this night,
 To break this shadow
Into a thousand lights of sun,
Into a thousand whirling
 dreams
 Of sun!



Stephen Crane

Places Among The Stars

Recited by Leman Gafarova



He (1871-1900) was one of America's foremost realistic writers, and his works have been credited with marking the beginning of modern American Naturalism. He was a novelist, poet, and short-story writer.

Places among the stars,
Soft gardens near the sun,
Keep your distant beauty;
Shed no beams upon my weak heart.

Since she is here
In a place of blackness,
Not your golden days
Nor your silver nights
Can call me to you.

Since she is here
In a place of blackness,
Here I stay and wait



Joy Harjo

Remember

Recited by Leyla Abdullazadeh



Joy Harjo was born on May 9, 1951 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. She is a poet, musician and author. She is also the first Native American United States Poet Laureate. She is an important figure in the second wave of the literary Native American Renaissance of the late twentieth century.

Remember the sky that you were born under,
know each of the star's stories.

Remember the moon, know who she is.

Remember the sun's birth at dawn, that is the
strongest point of time. Remember sundown
and the giving away to night.

Remember your birth, how your mother struggled
to give you form and breath. You are evidence of
her life, and her mother's, and hers.

Remember your father. He is your life, also.

Remember the earth whose skin you are:
red earth, black earth, yellow earth, white earth brown earth,
we are earth. Remember the plants, trees, animal life who all have
their

tribes, their families, their histories, too. Talk to them,
listen to them. They are alive poems.

Remember the wind. Remember her voice. She knows the
origin of this universe.

Remember you are all people and all people
are you.

Remember you are this universe and this
universe is you.

Remember all is in motion, is growing, is you.

Remember language comes from this.

Remember the dance language is, that life is.

Remember.



T.S. Eliot

Fragment from **The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock**

Recited by Maleyka Suleymanova

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", commonly known as "Prufrock", is the first professionally published poem by American-born British poet Thomas Stearns Eliot. The poem's structure was heavily influenced by Eliot's extensive reading of Dante Alighieri and makes several references to the Bible and other literary works.

Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table;
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:
Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent
To lead you to an overwhelming question....
Oh, do not ask, "What is it?"
Let us go and make our visit.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

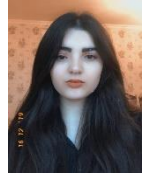
The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,
Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,
And seeing that it was a soft October night,
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.



Washington Irving

A Certain Young Lady

Recited by Naila Ibadova



Washington Irving is the first American writer and is called the “first American man of letters.” He was born in 1783 in America. He is short story writer, essayist, biographer, historian and diplomat of the early 19th century. His the most famous works are "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow", "Rip Van Winkle".

THERE'S a certain young lady,
Who's just in her heyday,
And full of all mischief, I ween;
So teasing! so pleasing!
Capricious! delicious!
And you know very well whom I
mean.

With an eye dark as night,
Yet than noonday more bright,
Was ever a black eye so keen?
It can thrill with a glance,
With a beam can entrance,
And you know very well whom I
mean.

With a stately step -- such as
You'd expect in a duchess --
And a brow might distinguish a
queen,
With a mighty proud air,
That says "touch me who dare,"
And you know very well whom I
mean.

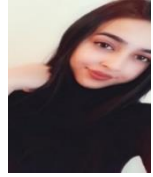
With a toss of the head
That strikes one quite dead,
But a smile to revive one again;
That toss so appalling!
That smile so enthralling!
And you know very well whom I
mean.
Confound her! devil take her! --
A cruel heart-breaker --
But hold! see that smile so serene.
God love her! God bless her!
May nothing distress her!
You know very well whom I mean.
Heaven help the adorer
Who happens to bore her,
The lover who wakens her spleen;
But too blest for a sinner
Is he who shall win her,
And you know very well whom I
mean.



William Shakespeare

Sonnet 137

Recited by Narmina Ibrahimli

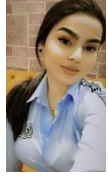


Sonnet 137 presents the poet seriously musing over just how false love can be. He is confused, for he finds himself insensibly drawn to a woman whom he ought — in a more rational state of mind — to repudiate. The conflict between passion and judgment shows just how mortified and perplexed he is by his submission to an irrational, impulsive element of his personality.

Thou blind fool, Love, what dost thou to mine eyes,
That they behold, and see not what they see?
They know what beauty is, see where it lies,
Yet what the best is take the worst to be.
If eyes, corrupt by over-partial looks,
Be anchored in the bay where all men ride,
Why of eyes' falsehood hast thou forged hooks,
Whereto the judgment of my heart is tied?
Why should my heart think that a several plot,
Which my heart knows the wide world's common place?
Or mine eyes, seeing this, say this is not,
To put fair truth upon so foul a face?
In things right true my heart and eyes have erred,
And to this false plague are they now transferred.



Edna St. Vincent Millay



Recuerdo

Recited by Nazrin Mammadova

“Recuerdo” means “I remember” as well as referring to “a memory” in Spanish. ‘Recuerdo’ by Edna St. Vincent Millay relays the memories of a speaker recalling a night she and her companion spent sailing back and forth on a ferry, eating fruit and watching the sky. Their indulgent night ended with a few good deeds, solidifying the experience as a positive one within the speaker’s memory.

We were very tired, we were very merry—
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry.
It was bare and bright, and smelled like a stable—
But we looked into a fire, we leaned across a table,
We lay on a hill-top underneath the moon;
And the whistles kept blowing, and the dawn came soon.

We were very tired, we were very merry—
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry;
And you ate an apple, and I ate a pear,
From a dozen of each we had bought somewhere;
And the sky went wan, and the wind came cold,
And the sun rose dripping, a bucketful of gold.

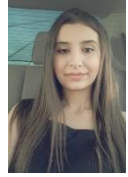
We were very tired, we were very merry,
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry.
We hailed, “Good morrow, mother!” to a shawl-covered head,
And bought a morning paper, which neither of us read;
And she wept, “God bless you!” for the apples and pears,
And we gave her all our money but our subway fares.



Ralph Waldo Emerson

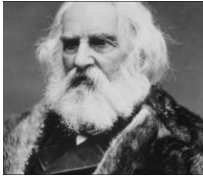
Water

Recited by Nigar Huseynova



Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) was an American essayist, poet, philosopher, lecturer who led transcendentalist movement. He was also the first major American literary and intellectual figure to widely explore, write seriously about, and seek to broaden the domestic audience for classical Asian and Middle Eastern works.

The water understands
Civilization well;
It wets my foot, but prettily,
It chills my life, but wittily,
It is not disconcerted,
It is not broken-hearted:
Well used, it decketh joy,
Adorneth, doubleth joy:
Ill used, it will destroy,
In perfect time and measure
With a face of golden pleasure
Elegantly destroy.



Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The Twilight

Recited by Nurana Suleymanova



Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) is one of the most widely known American poets of the 19th century. He achieved a level of national and international prominence previously unequalled in the literary history of the United States. He is one of the few American writers honoured in the Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey.

The twilight is sad and cloudy,
The wind blows wild and free,
And like the wings of sea-birds
Flash the white caps of the sea.
But in the fisherman's cottage
There shines a ruddier light,
And a little face at the window
Peers out into the night.
Close, close it is pressed to the window,
As if those childish eyes
Were looking into the darkness,
To see some form arise.
And a woman's waving shadow
Is passing to and fro,
Now rising to the ceiling,
Now bowing and bending low.
What tale do the roaring ocean
And the night wind bleak and wild,
As, they beat at the crazy casement,
Tell to that little child?
And why do the roaring ocean,
And the night wind will and bleak,
As they beat at the heart of the mother,
Drive the colour from her cheek?



Ralph Waldo Emerson

Friendship

Recited by Parvin Ahmadzadeh



Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) was an American essayist, poet, philosopher, lecturer who led transcendentalist movement. He was also the first major American literary and intellectual figure to widely explore, write seriously about, and seek to broaden the domestic audience for classical Asian and Middle Eastern works. He was the champion of individualism.

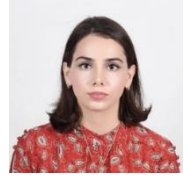
A ruddy drop of manly blood
The surging sea outweighs,
The world uncertain comes and goes;
The lover rooted stays.
I fancied he was fled,-
And, after many a year,
Glowed unexhausted kindliness,
Like daily sunrise there.
My careful heart was free again,
O friend, my bosom said,
Through thee alone the sky is arched,
Through thee the rose is red;
All things through thee take nobler form,
And look beyond the earth,
The mill-round of our fate appears
A sun-path in thy worth.
Me too thy nobleness had taught
To master my despair;
The fountains of my hidden life
Are through thy friendship fair.



Elizabeth Bishop

One Art

Recited by Rahila Mammadova



"One Art" is a poem by American poet Elizabeth Bishop, originally published in *The New Yorker* in 1976. It is considered to be one of the best villanelles in the English Language. The poem shares the title of a collection of Bishop's letters from 1928 to 1979, published as her autobiography in 1994.

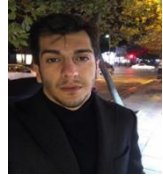
The art of losing isn't hard to master;
so many things seem filled with the intent
to be lost that their loss is no disaster,
Lose something every day. Accept the fluster
of lost door keys, the hour badly spent.
The art of losing isn't hard to master.
Then practice losing farther, losing faster:
places, and names, and where it was you meant
to travel. None of these will bring disaster.
I lost my mother's watch. And look! my last, or
next-to-last, of three beloved houses went.
The art of losing isn't hard to master.
I lost two cities, lovely ones. And, vaster,
some realms I owned, two rivers, a continent.
I miss them, but it wasn't a disaster.
-- Even losing you I shan't have lied. It's evident
the art of losing's not too hard to master
though it may look like a disaster.



William Shakespeare

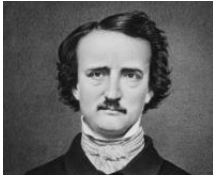
Sonnet 18

Recited by Saddam Mammedov



William Shakespeare (26 April 1564 – 23 April 1616) was an English poet, playwright, and actor, widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's greatest dramatist. He is often called England's national poet and the "Bard of Avon" (or simply "the Bard"). His extant works, including collaborations, consist of some 39 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and a few other verses, some of uncertain authorship.

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date;
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.



Edgar Allan Poe

A Dream Within a Dream

Recited by Seadet Ahmadova



Edgar Allan Poe's (1809-1849) regarded in literary histories and handbooks as the principal forerunner of the “art for art's sake” movement in 19th-century European literature.

Take this kiss upon the brow!
And, in parting from you now,
Thus much let me avow:
You are not wrong who deem
That my days have been a dream;
Yet if hope has flown away
In a night, or in a day,
In a vision, or in none,
Is it therefore the less gone?
All that we see or seem
Is but a dream within a dream.
I stand amid the roar
Of a surf-tormented shore,
And I hold within my hand
Grains of the golden sand--
How few! yet how they creep
Through my fingers to the deep,
While I weep--while I weep!
O God! can I not grasp
Them with a tighter clasp?
O God! can I not save
One from the pitiless wave?
Is *all* that we see or seem
But a dream within a dream?



Sara Teasdale

I Know the Stars

Recited by Sonasi Valiyeva



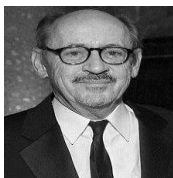
Sara Teasdale (1884-1933) was born in St. Louis, Missouri to a wealthy family. As a young woman she traveled to Chicago and grew acquainted with Harriet Monroe and literary circle around Poetry. She wrote seven books of poetry in her lifetime and received public admiration for her well-crafted lyrical poetry, which centered on a woman's changing perspectives on beauty, love, and death.

I know the stars by their names,
Aldebaran, Altair,
And I know the path they take
Up heaven's broad blue stair.

I know the secrets of men
By the look of their eyes,
Their gray thoughts, their strange thoughts
Have made me sad and wise.

But your eyes are dark to me
Though they seem to call and call-
I cannot tell if you love me
Or do not love me at all.

I know many things,
But the years come and go,
I shall die not knowing
The thing I long to know.



Billy Collins

Introduction to Poetry

Recited by Shafiga Ismayilova

"Introduction to Poetry" is the poet's way of saying that a poem is a thing of wonder and should be treated in a way that does not cause internal bruising to both poem and reader.

I ask them to take a poem
and hold it up to the light
like a color slide

or press an ear against its hive.

I say drop a mouse into a poem
and watch him probe his way out,

or walk inside the poem's room
and feel the walls for a light switch.

I want them to waterski
across the surface of a poem
waving at the author's name on the shore.

But all they want to do
is tie the poem to a chair with rope
and torture a confession out of it.

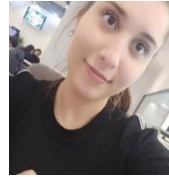
They begin beating it with a hose
to find out what it really means.



William Shakespeare

Sonnet 64

Recited by Shahla Abdurahimova



In Sonnet 64 the poet realizes that death is inevitable and time will come and take his love away. The concluding couplet, in contrast to Shakespeare's typical practice, provides no solution, no clever twist; only inevitable tears.

When I have seen by Time's fell hand defaced
The rich proud cost of outworn buried age;
When sometime lofty towers I see down-razed,
And brass eternal slave to mortal rage;
When I have seen the hungry ocean gain
Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,
And the firm soil win of the watery main,
Increasing store with loss, and loss with store;
When I have seen such interchange of state,
Or state itself confounded to decay;
Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminare
That Time will come and take my love away.
This thought is as a death which cannot choose
But weep to have that which it fears to lose.



Sylvia Plath

Mirror and Lake

Recited by Shams Imanova



Mirror is a free verse written by the American poet Sylvia Plath. The poem is written from the perspectives of two entities: a mirror and a lake, and the piece stands for the ideas of honesty, truth, and neutrality. By using a mirror as the speaker of the poem, she explores the life of a woman as she grows old from an outward perspective.

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.
What ever you see I swallow immediately
Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.
I am not cruel, only truthful---
The eye of a little god, four-cornered.
Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.
It is pink, with speckles. I have looked at it so long
I think it is a part of my heart. But it flickers.
Faces and darkness separate us over and over.
Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me,
Searching my reaches for what she really is.
Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.
I see her back, and reflect it faithfully.
She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.
I am important to her. She comes and goes.
Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.
In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old
woman
Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish.



Edgar Albert Guest

Only a Dad

Recited by Tamella Mammadli



Edgar Albert Guest was born in Birmingham, England in 20 August 1881. He was an American poet who was popular in the first half of the 20th century and became known as the People's Poet. His poems often had an inspirational and optimistic view of everyday life. Edgar A. Guest started his long career at the Detroit Free Press as a copyboy.

Only a dad, with a tired face,
Coming home from the daily race,
Bringing little of gold or fame,
To show how well he has played the game,
But glad in his heart that his own rejoice
To see him come, and to hear his voice.
Only a dad, with a brood of four,
One of ten million men or more.
Plodding along in the daily strife,
Bearing the whips and the scorns of life,
With never a whimper of pain or hate,
For the sake of those who at home await.
Only a dad, neither rich nor proud,
Merely one of the surging crowd
Toiling, striving from day to day,
Facing whatever may come his way,
Silent, whenever the harsh condemn,
And bearing it all for the love of them.
Only a dad, but he gives his all
To smooth the way for his children small,
Doing, with courage stern and grim,
The deeds that his father did for him.
This is the line that for him I pen,
Only a dad, but the best of men.



George Santayana

The Poet's Testament

Recited by Turac Faraczadeh



George Santayana (1863-1952) was a Spanish-born American philosopher who is regarded as one of the most important thinkers of the first half of the twentieth century, and one of the most prominent champions of critical realism. He was also a critic, dramatist, educator, essayist, novelist, and poet.

I give back to the earth what the earth gave,
All to the furrow, none to the grave,
The candle's out, the spirit's vigil spent;
Sight may not follow where the vision went.

I leave you but the sound of many a word
In mocking echoes haply overheard,
I sang to heaven. My exile made me free,
from world to world, from all worlds carried me.

Spared by the furies, for the Fates were kind,
I paced the pillared cloisters of the mind;
All times my present, everywhere my place,
Nor fear, nor hope, nor envy saw my face.

Blow what winds would, the ancient truth was mine,
And friendship mellowed in the flush of wine,
And heavenly laughter, shaking from its wings
Atoms of light and tears for mortal things.

To trembling harmonies of field and cloud,
Of flesh and spirit was my worship vowed.
Let form, let music, let all quickening air
Fulfil in beauty my imperfect prayer.



Adrienne Rich

A Ball is for Throwing

Recited by Umnisa Mehtizada



“A ball is for throwing” is a narrative poem. It is one of Adrienne Rich's most popular works. "A Ball is for Throwing" has a tremendous sense of playfulness and childishness which it contrasts with the discipline and repression of the much of the world.

See it, the beautiful ball
Poised in the toyshop window,
Rounder than sun or moon.
Is it red? is it blue? is it violet?
It is everything we desire,
And it does not exist at all.
Non-existent and beautiful? Quite.
In the rounding leap of our hands,
In the longing hush of air,
We know what that ball could be,
How its blues and reds could spin
To a headier violet.
Beautiful in the mind,
Like a word we are waiting to hear,
That ball is construed, but lives
Only in flash of flight,
From the instant of release
To the catch in another's hand.
And the toy withheld is a token
Of all who refrain from play—
The shopkeepers, the collectors
Like Queen Victoria,
in whose adorable doll's house
Nothing was ever broken.



Robert Frost

The Road Not Taken

Recited by Zarina Abbasova



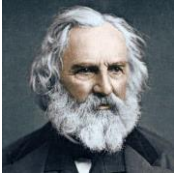
Robert Frost was born on March 26, 1874, in San Francisco, California and died of tuberculosis on January 29, 1963. He was an American poet who depicted realistic New England life through language and situations familiar to the common man. He won four Pulitzer Prizes for his work.

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.



Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The Rainy Day

Recited by Zakiyya Amirli



Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was a famous American poet. Siddiqui Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's "Rainy Day" uses the themes of lost and renewed hope, youth and grief to show how much our past and future experiences affect our lives and how though we face multiple struggles in life we can overcome them. The rainy day is a symbol of life. The idea behind it is that life is like a rainy day because rain represents bad things that happen to you.

The day is cold and dark and dreary
It rains and the wind is never weary
The vine still clings to the moldering wall,
But at every gust, the dead leaves fall
And the day is dark and dreary
My life is cold and dark and dreary
It rains and the wind is never weary
My thought still clings to the moldering Past
But the hopes of youth, fall thick in the blast
And the days are dark and dreary
Be still, sad heart! And cease repining!
Behind the clouds is the sun still shining
Thy fate is the common fate of all
Into each life, some rain must fall