

# POETRY BY HEART



## POETRY BY HEART HOME LEARNING CHALLENGE

**Choose a poem. Learn it by heart. Get ready to share it aloud.**

Here's the challenge: find one poem you love, learn it by heart and get ready to share it aloud by February half term.

You can take the challenge on your own or with friends.



- **1. Choose a poem from the 5 selected**
- **2. Learn it by heart-** There's no short cut to this. Like getting to know a new friend, you have to make time to do things together. Read your poem aloud to other people, illustrate it, write out the lines and stick them on the fridge door. Remember its sections as if they are scenes in a slow-motion movie or rooms in a house. Repeat the lines while you're walking the dog. Recite it to the dog or in the shower or in front of a mirror. Give someone else the poem and get them to test you. Repetition is the key! Keep going until you've got it – you'll get there
- **3. Share it aloud-** Once you know the words, think about how you want to say them. When starting to recite poetry, everyone goes too quickly – slow right down! And then slow down some more, especially where the punctuation and line breaks give you clues about this! And get your audience ready to listen – count to 10 before you start. Keep it much slower than your usual speech – let your listeners savour every word. Don't be tempted to add lots of extra emotion or actions – everything you need is right there in the words. Think about the ending – you want to keep your listeners hanging on the last word for one more second, thinking about what they've heard before they all start clapping. Recite it in school, or at home. Get someone you know to learn a poem too and perform your poems to each other, live and in person, over the phone or by video chat. You could make a video and share it with us too.
- **And if you enjoy that, you can enter the Poetry By Heart competition** The search to find England's best poetry reciters in key stages 2,3,4 and 5 is under way. It could be you! Enter your school or college Poetry By Heart competition and you're the first step on your way to the national finals, judged by top poets. Talk to your teacher about what you need to do next! Deadline for competition entries: 28th February 2021.

# Escape at Bedtime

by Robert Louis Stevenson

The lights from the parlour and kitchen shone out  
Through the blinds and the windows and bars;  
And high overhead and all moving about,  
There were thousands of millions of stars.

There ne'er were such thousands of leaves on a tree,  
Nor of people in church or the Park,  
As the crowds of the stars looked down upon me,  
And that glittered and winked in the dark.

The Dog, and the Plough, and the Hunter, and all,  
And the star of the sailor, and Mars,  
These shone in the sky, and the pail by the wall  
Would be half full of water and stars.

They saw me at last, and they chased me with cries,  
And they soon had me packed into bed;  
But the glory kept shining and bright in my eyes,  
And the stars going round in my head.



# I've learned to sing a song of hope'

## by Georgia Douglas Johnson

I've learned to sing a song of hope,  
I've said goodbye to despair,  
I caught the note in a thrush's throat,  
I sang – and the world was fair!

I've learned to sing a song of joy  
It bends the skies to me,  
The song of joy is the song of hope  
Grown to maturity.

I've learned to laugh away my tears  
As through the dark I go,  
For love and laughter conquer fears  
My heart has come to know.

I've learned a song of happiness  
It is a song of love,  
For love alone is happiness  
And happiness is love.



# Something Told The Wild Geese

by Rachel Field

Something told the wild geese  
It was time to go.  
Though the fields lay golden  
Something whispered, — “Snow.”

Leaves were green and stirring,  
Berries, luster-glossed,  
But beneath warm feathers  
Something cautioned,—”Frost.”

All the sagging orchards  
Steamed with amber spice,  
But each wild breast stiffened  
At remembered ice.

Something told the wild geese  
It was time to fly,—  
Summer sun was on their wings,  
Winter in their cry.



# Leisure

by W.H. Davies

What is this life if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare? -  
No time to stand beneath the boughs  
And stare as long as sheep or cows:  
No time to see, when woods we pass,  
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass:  
No time to see, in broad daylight,  
Streams full of stars, like skies at night:  
No time to turn at Beauty's glance,  
And watch her feet, how they can dance:  
No time to wait till her mouth can  
Enrich that smile her eyes began?  
A poor life this if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare.



# The north wind doth blow

The north wind doth blow,  
And we shall have snow,  
And what will the robin do then, Poor thing?  
He'll sit in a barn,  
And keep himself warm,  
And hide his head under his wing, Poor thing!

The north wind doth blow,  
And we shall have snow,  
And what will the swallow do then, Poor thing?  
Oh, do you not know  
That he's off long ago,  
To a country where he will find spring, Poor thing!

The north wind doth blow,  
And we shall have snow,  
And what will the dormouse do then, Poor thing?  
Roll'd up like a ball  
In his nest snug and small  
He'll sleep till warm weather comes in, Poor thing!

