

Poetry for memorization and recitation
Fall 2008

1. Limericks

A fractious old person named Laurel,
Whose temper disposed him to quarrel,
Was most impolite
When he knew he was right
And his language when wrong was immoral.

There was a young man who sent e-mails,
To various dubious females,
When asked what they said,
He just shook his head;
I'd rather not go into details.

(by Richard C. Long
<http://www.richardlong.org.uk/page1.htm>)

2. Is There Any Reward? Hilaire Belloc
French-English (1870-1953)

Is there any reward?
I'm beginning to doubt it.
I am broken and bored,
Is there any reward
Reassure me, Good Lord,
And inform me about it.
Is there any reward?
I'm beginning to doubt it.

3. I Never Hear The Word "Escape"
Emily Dickinson American (1830-1886)

I never hear the word "escape"
Without a quicker blood,
A sudden expectation,
A flying attitude.

I never hear of prisons broad
By soldiers battered down,
But I tug childish at my bars, —
Only to fail again!

4. A Prayer Sara Teasdale
American (1884-1933)

Until I lose my soul and lie
Blind to the beauty of the earth,
Deaf though shouting wind goes by,
Dumb in a storm of mirth;

Until my heart is quenched at length
And I have left the land of men,
Oh, let me love with all my strength
Careless if I am loved again.

5. Longing Matthew Arnold
English (1822-1888)

Come to me in my dreams, and then
By day I shall be well again!
For so the night will more than pay
The hopeless longing of the day.

Come, as thou cam'st a thousand times,
A messenger from radiant climes,
And smile on thy new world, and be
As kind to others as to me!

Or, as thou never cam'st in sooth,
Come now, and let me dream it truth,
And part my hair, and kiss my brow,
And say, My love, why sufferest thou?

Come to me in my dreams, and then
By day I shall be well again!
For so the night will more than pay
The hopeless longing of the day.

6. I abide and abide and better abide
Sir Thomas Wyatt English (1503-1542)

I abide and abide and better abide
(and after the old proverb) the happy day;
And ever my lady to me doth say
'Let me alone and I will provide'.
I abide and abide and tarry the tide,
And with abiding speed well ye may!
Thus do I abide I wot alway
Not her obtaining nor yet denied.
Aye me! this long abiding
Seemeth to me as who sayeth
A prolonging of a dying death
Or a refusing of a desired thing.
Much were it better for to be plain
Than to say 'abide' and yet not obtain.

7. Love and Jealousy William Walsh
English (1663-1708)

How much are they deceived who vainly strive,
By jealous fears, to keep our flames alive?
Love's like a torch, which if secured from blasts,
Will faintlier burn; but then it longer lasts.
Exposed to storms of jealousy and doubt,
The blaze grows greater, but 'tis sooner out.

8. It's Ours Charles Bukowski
German-American (1920-1994)

there is always that space there
just before they get to us
that space
that fine relaxer
the breather
while say
flopping on a bed
thinking of nothing
or say
pouring a glass of water from the
spigot
while entranced by
nothing

that
gentle pure
space

it's worth

centuries of
existence

say

just to scratch your neck
while looking out the window at
a bare branch

that space
there
before they get to us
ensures
that
when they do
they won't
get it all

ever.