

PINNER SCHOOLS' CLUSTER

POETRY BY HEART

CHOOSE A POEM ♡ LEARN IT BY HEART ♡ PERFORM IT OUT LOUD

Choose a poem to learn by heart and perform out loud.

You can choose:

- A poem from this collection
- Another poem of your choice
- A poem you have written
- A poem in English or in your home language

Remember to challenge yourself!

Other places to find great poems:

- <https://poetrybyheart.org.uk/> (click on 'Poetry Collections')
- <https://poetryarchive.org/>
- <https://childrens.poetryarchive.org/>
- <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/browse>

I'm a Little Teapot

I'm a little teapot,
Short and stout,
Here is my handle
Here is my spout
When I get all steamed up,
Hear me shout,
Tip me over and pour me out!

Caterpillar poem

Fuzzy Wuzzy, creepy crawly,
Caterpillar funny.
You will be a butterfly,
When the days are sunny.
Winging, flinging, dancing, springing,
Butterfly so yellow.
You were once a caterpillar,
Wiggly, wiggly fellow.

A Little Seed

A little seed for me to sow
A little earth to make it grow.
A little hole,
A little pat,
A little wish,
And that is that.
A little sun,
A little shower,
A little while,
And then – a flower.

(By Sarah Griffin)

Incy Wincy Spider

Incy Wincy spider climbing up the spout
Down came the rain and washed the spider
out
Out came the sunshine and dried up all the
rain
And Incy Wincy spider climbed up the spout
again

Crayon poem

With these crayons
I could draw
A crazy
Purple dinosaur
An orange mouse
With yellow cheese
A big black dog
With big brown fleas
A tall blue house
A small green door
Four white windows
Something more?
Silver raindrops
Golden sun
Then a RAINBOW
Sounds like fun!
With these crayons I could draw
So. Much.More.

(By James Carter)

The Owl and the Pussycat

The Owl and the Pussy-cat went to sea
In a beautiful pea-green boat,
They took some honey, and plenty of money,
Wrapped up in a five-pound note.
The Owl looked up to the stars above,
And sang to a small guitar,
'O lovely Pussy! O Pussy, my love,
What a beautiful Pussy you are,
You are,
You are!
What a beautiful Pussy you are!'

(By Edward Lear)

Frog

I leap. I croak.
I am the friend of witches.
I hop. I leap
I am often found in ditches
in ponds
in lakes
and even under logs
some say I'm green and warty
but I'm a smooth, jewel-skinned frog.

(By Joseph Coelho)

The Eagle

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls

(By Tennyson)

Open a book

Open a book,
And you will find,
People and places of every kind,
Open a book,
And you can be,
Anything you want to be,
Open a book,
And you can share,
Wondrous words you find in there,
Open a book,
And I will too,
You read to me,
And I'll read to you!

(By Jane Baskwill)

May time Magic

A little seed
For me to sow...

A little earth
To make it grow...
A little hole,
A little pat...
A little wish,
And that is that.

(By Mabel Watts)

Who Has Seen the Wind?

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.

(By Christina Rossetti)

A Parade of Beast Doodles

When I opened up today
and unwrapped the morning
i found a present

a sky full of clouds
all puff-pomps and shine-streaks
bubble-whites and lace-feathers
a canopy of stipple-shapes
a parade of beast-doodles and
all I could do was
lie down
to skybig
to clouddream
and wonder
what I might unwrap

This afternoon.

(By Zaro Weil)

Alligator Pie

Alligator pie, alligator pie,
If I don't get some I think I'm gonna
die.
Give away the green grass, give away
the sky,
But don't give away my alligator pie.

Alligator stew, alligator stew,
If I don't get some I don't know what
I'll do.
Give away my furry hat, give away my
shoe,
But don't give away my alligator stew.

Alligator soup, alligator soup,
If I don't get some I think I'm gonna
droop.
Give away my hockey-stick, give away
my hoop,
But don't give away my alligator soup.

(By Dennis Lee)

If All The World Were Paper

If all the world were paper
I would fold up my gran
and take her everywhere I go.
I would laminate my baby sister in bubble wrap
and lay her to sleep in unbound fairy-tale book
pages.
And should she get scared,
rip every fear,
shred every scream,
tear every tear.

If all the world were paper
I would re-bind my grandfather,
smooth out the dog-ears to all his stories,
place his younger days in a zoetrope
and flush the harrowing chapters
down an ink-gurgling well.

If all the world were paper,
kind deeds would be post-it notes
that stick to the doer in ever-growing trails,
so we would always remember,
friends would come with perforated lines
so you could keep their best bits with you
at all times.

If all the world were paper,
Christmas wrapping foil and birthday
cards
would follow you to school.

If all the world were paper
dreams would be braille
so we could read them whilst we
slept,
nightmares would be shopping lists
because shopping lists are so easy to
forget.

If all the world were paper
arguments would rustle before they
started
and could be put right with a little
tape.

If all the world were paper
we could paperclip families together,
draw smiles on all the sad faces,
rub out the tears,
cover our homes in Tippex and start
all over again.
All the world is not paper,
but whilst we can imagine it were
we can recycle the rough times
knowing we will never ever fold.

(By Joseph Coelho)

Parade

When the bugs decided
to have a parade
ten quintillion came
who can guess what they
weighed

Wings and antennae
went trembling a-shiver
while mini-legs scuffled
all directions a-quiver

It was just twilight time
not quite moon not quite
sun
that cockeyed mad
moment
beasties love to have fun

Off they went furrowing
jumping and burrowing
scampering scurrying
teeny specks hurrying

They whirred slid and
squirmed
swam buzzed and turned
playing hooraying
batty bug holidaying

They whizzed by all zipping
glittering then fluttering
diving and gliding
whoops sometimes
colliding

Advancing while dancing
speeding receding
straying sashaying
wild buggy horseplaying

Teetering and skeetering
metering and greetering
creepering and crawling
a great insect ballering

But most bugs hate lines
there were ten quintillion
whines
as they acted their worst
pouting, I must go first

Us us us called the Ants
we know the way
we have to go first
ant starts with A

What a loud babbling fuss
a bug rumpus and more
a million species spinning
a deafening uproar

At last they agreed
that the ants would
proceed
with Bumblebees busily
following their lead

Our turn next chirped the
Crickets
in an ear-splitting blast
no us snapped Dragonflies
as Earwigs crept past

Fireflies spun overhead
in a ring of bright lights
while Grasshoppers and
Horseflies
high-hopped in delight

Inchworms and June bugs
kept checking the time
as katydids and Lacewings
squeaked this row is mine

Mosquitoes and Netwings
Owflies Planthoppers
swooped about singing
every bug-tune
showstopper

The Question Mark
Butterflies
all orange and brown dots
claimed a row to
themselves
joking we deserve some
good spots

Rice Weevils and Stink Bugs
laughed as they twined
whooping we love a parade
as Termites crept behind

Underwings and Vine
Borers
began to slow down
hurry up buzzed the Wasps
those Xylodromumses are
around

At last came Yellow
Mealworms
striped Zebra Butterflies
swarming wispy whirls
as moonbeams lit the sky

All bugs at last arrived
parading endless rows
when ten quintillion roared
at once

NOW WHERE DOES WE
GOES?

(By Zara Weil)

Forbidden Poem

This poem is not for children.
Keep out!
There is a big oak door
in front of this poem.
It's locked.
And on the door is a notice
in big red letters.
It says: Any child who enters here
will never be the same again.
WARNING. KEEP OUT.

But what's this?
A key in a keyhole.
And what's more,
nobody's about.

"Go on. Look,"
says a little voice
inside your head.
"Surely a poem
cannot strike you dead?"

You turn the key.
The door swings wide.
And then you witness
what's inside.

And from that day
you'll try in vain.
You'll never be the same again.

(By Tony Milton)

If You Could See Laughter

Hey, it is blue! No, surely red
– the colour of each breath
pumped out by the joy of running,
the jumpstart of a joke.
Tickle-breath is long and spiral.
Pink.
I think.
If you could see laughter
it would look like balloons,
the sort magicians knot in squeaky twists.
Laugh a giraffe.
Guffaw a poodle.
A belly-laugh creates balloons that float.
At the pantomime,
the ceiling of the theatre jostles with colour.
See this baby reaching for the light?
A yellow hiccup of laughter pops out,
floats above us for days.
We could rise off the ground with laughter,
tie strings on it and sail around the world.

(By Mandy Coe)

The Magic Box

I will put in the box

the swish of a silk sari on a summer night,
fire from the nostrils of a Chinese dragon,
the tip of a tongue touching a tooth.

I will put in the box

a snowman with a rumbling belly
a sip of the bluest water from Lake Lucerne,
a leaping spark from an electric fish.

I will put into the box

three violet wishes spoken in Gujarati,
the last joke of an ancient uncle,
and the first smile of a baby.

I will put into the box

a fifth season and a black sun,
a cowboy on a broomstick
and a witch on a white horse.

My box is fashioned from ice and gold and steel,
with stars on the lid and secrets in the corners.
Its hinges are the toe joints of dinosaurs.

I shall surf in my box
on the great high-rolling breakers of the wild Atlantic,
then wash ashore on a yellow beach
the colour of the sun.

(By Kit Wright)

The River

The River's a wanderer.
A nomad, a tramp,
He doesn't choose one place
To set up his camp.

The River's a winder,
Through valley and hill
He twists and he turns,
He just cannot be still.

The River's a hoarder,
And he buries down deep
Those little treasures
That he wants to keep.

The River's a baby,
He gurgles and hums,
And sounds like he's happily
Sucking his thumbs.

The River's a singer,
As he dances along,
The countryside echoes
The notes of his song.

The River's a monster
Hungry and vexed,
He's gobbled up trees
And he'll swallow you next.

(By Valerie Bloom)

Daffodils

I wander'd lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretch'd in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but
they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
in such a jound company:
I gazed - and gazed - but little thought
What wealth the show to me had
brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

(By William Wordsworth)

How to Cut a Pomegranate

'Never,' said my father,
'Never cut a pomegranate
through the heart. It will weep blood.
Treat it delicately, with respect.
Just slit the upper skin across four quarters.
This is a magic fruit,
so when you split it open, be prepared
for the jewels of the world to tumble out,
more precious than garnets,
more lustrous than rubies,
lit as if from inside.
Each jewel contains a living seed.
Separate one crystal.
Hold it up to catch the light.
Inside is a whole universe.
No common jewel can give you this.'
Afterwards, I tried to make necklaces
of pomegranate seeds.
The juice spurted out, bright crimson,
and stained my fingers, then my mouth.
I didn't mind. The juice tasted of gardens
I had never seen, voluptuous
with myrtle, lemon, jasmine,
and alive with parrots' wings.
The pomegranate reminded me
that somewhere I had another home

(By Imtiaz Dharker)

Remember

when shadows creep across your mind
and smiles are thin and tight
when you do what you believe in
but question if it's right
when you focus not on what you've got
but all the things you lack
there may be rain at the front of the house
but sunshine round the back

when you can't remember where you found
the words you used to say
when your heartbeat is the music
that you listen to each day
when you turn away from talent
in case you lose the knack
there may be rain at the front of the house
but sunshine round the back

(By Matt Goodfellow)

The language of cat

Teach me the language of Cat;
the slow-motion blink, that crystal stare,
a tight-lipped purr and a wide-mouthed hiss.
Let me walk with a saunter, nose in the air.

Teach my ears the way to ignore
names that I'm called. May they only twitch
to the distant shake of a boxful of biscuits,
the clink of a fork on a china dish.

Teach me that vanishing trick
where dents in cushions appear, and I'm missed.
Show me the high-wire trip along fences
to hideaway places, that no-one but me knows exist.

Don't teach me Dog,
all eager to please, that slobbers, yaps and begs for a pat,
that sits when told by its owner, that's led on a lead.
No, not that. Teach me the language of Cat

(By Rachel Rooney)

The Duelling Duo

In the pitch of night
two knights shared a thought,
with a sword in each hand
as they slashed and fought
on the highest ramparts
of the crumbling fort.

The duo duelled
with their dual swords
hacking left then right,
their metal ringing,
each convinced they were right.

One would hit – one would miss
in the mine-dark night
with its coal-fist mist.
One blade rang on a helmet,
hand tight on a hilt-rung sword,
both proving their mettle
in this mourning morning.

Each trying to raze
the other to the ground,
ignoring the sun's rays,
they danced their iron,
refusing to pause,
ignoring the sweat
that rained from their pores,
each desperate to reign
with their armour-bash peel.

The same thought in each head
that neither could still.
Both were right,
could not be wrong.
Apparent in their blades, raised.
Transparent in their eyes, glazed.

“I am right.”

The lie they thought
as they fought
in the fort.

(By Joseph Coelho)

Hey Diddle Diddle

Wash your ears! Mum said.
So I took them off,
And stuck them in the washing machine.

Clean your room! Dad said.
So I rolled it up,
And shook it out of the window.

Make the breakfast! My brother said
So I did –
With bits of balsa wood and modelling glue.

Feed the Cat, My Auntie said,
So I fed him...
To the dog!

Take your time! Dad said.
So I packed up the clocks
And flew off to Mars
Where the days fly by,
Wearing nothing but stars!

(By Andrew Fusek-Peters)

The Listener

'Is there anybody there?' said the Traveller,
Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
Of the forest's ferny floor:
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
Above the Traveller's head:
And he smote upon the door again a second time;
'Is there anybody there?' he said.
But no one descended to the Traveller;
No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,
Where he stood perplexed and still.
But only a host of phantom listeners
That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
To that voice from the world of men:
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,
That goes down to the empty hall,
Harkening in an air stirred and shaken
By the lonely Traveller's call.
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
Their stillness answering his cry,
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
'Neath the starred and leafy sky;
For he suddenly smote on the door, even
Louder, and lifted his head:—
'Tell them I came, and no one answered,
That I kept my word,' he said.
Never the least stir made the listeners,
Though every word he spake
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
From the one man left awake:
Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward,
When the plunging hoofs were gone.

(By Walter de la Mare)

Isn't my name magical?

Nobody can see my name on me.
My name is inside
and all over me, unseen
like other people also keep it.
Isn't my name magical?

My name is mine only.
It tells me I am individual,
the one special person it shakes
when I'm wanted.

Even if someone else answers
for me, my message hangs in the air
haunting others, till it stops
with me, the right name.
Isn't your name and my name magic?

If I'm with hundreds of people and my
name gets called,
my sound switches me on to answer
like it was my human electricity.

My name echoes across the
playground,
it comes, it demands my attention,
I have to find out who calls,
who wants me for what.
My name gets blurted out in class,
it is terror, at a bad time,
because somebody is cross.

My name gets called in a whisper,
I am happy, because
my name may have touched me
with a loving voice.
Isn't your name and my name magic?

(By James Berry)

Tippy-Tappy

Tippy-tappy
Tippy-tappy
Tap, tap, tap.

Pippy-peppy
Pippy-peppy
Pep, pep, pep.

Mippy-moppy
Mippy-moppy
Mop, mop, mop.

Nippy-nappy
Nippy-nappy
Nap, nap, nap.

Lippy-lippy Lippy-lippy
Lip, lip, lip.

Hippy-hoppy
Hippy-hoppy
Hop, hop, hop.

Stippy-steppy
Stippy-steppy
Step, step, step.

Dippy-dappy
Dippy-dappy
Dip, dip, dip.

Kippy-cuppy
Kippy-cuppy
Cup, cup, cup.

Ippy-uppy
Ippy-uppy
Up, up, up.

(By Michael Rosen)

Teachers Are Human Too

They cook, they clean
They read, they dream
They eat ice cream
Teachers are human too

They sing and clap
They jog, they nap
With dog on lap
Teachers are human too

They laze about
They preen, they pout
They're full of doubt
Teachers are human too

They make a brew
They're just like you
They sometimes even
Use the loo

(It's true!)

Because teachers
Are human too.

(By Joshua Seigal)

The sound collector

A stranger called this morning
Dressed all in black and grey
Put every sound into a bag
And carried them away

The whistling of the kettle
The turning of the lock
The purring of the kitten
The ticking of the clock

The popping of the toaster
The crunching of the flakes
When you spread the marmalade
The scraping noise it makes

The hissing of the frying pan
The ticking of the grill
The bubbling of the bathtub
As it starts to fill

The drumming of the raindrops
On the windowpane
When you do the washing-up
The gurgle of the drain

The crying of the baby
The squeaking of the chair
The swishing of the curtain
The creaking of the stair

A stranger called this morning
He didn't leave his name
Left us only silence
Life will never be the same

(By Roger McGough)

From A Railway Carriage

Faster than fairies, faster than witches,
Bridges and houses, hedges and ditches;
And charging along like troops in a battle,
All through the meadows the horses and
cattle:

All of the sights of the hill and the plain
Fly as thick as driving rain;
And ever again, in the wink of an eye,
Painted stations whistle by.

Here is a child who clambers and
scrambles,
All by himself and gathering brambles;
Here is a tramp who stands and gazes;
And there is the green for stringing the
daisies!

Here is a cart run away in the road
Lumping along with man and load;
And here is a mill and there is a river:
Each a glimpse and gone for ever!

(By Robert Louis Stevenson)

Jabberwocky

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

“Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!”

He took his vorpal sword in hand;
Long time the manxome foe he
sought—
So rested he by the Tumtum tree
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and
through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

“And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!”
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

(By Lewis Carroll)

Macavity: The Mystery Cat

Macavity's a Mystery Cat: he's called the Hidden Paw —

For he's the master criminal who can defy the Law.

He's the bafflement of Scotland Yard, the Flying Squad's despair:

For when they reach the scene of crime —
Macavity's not there!

Macavity, Macavity, there's no one like Macavity,
He's broken every human law, he breaks the law of gravity.

His powers of levitation would make a fakir stare,
And when you reach the scene of crime —
Macavity's not there!

You may seek him in the basement, you may look up in the air —
But I tell you once and once again, Macavity's not there!

Macavity's a ginger cat, he's very tall and thin;
You would know him if you saw him, for his eyes are sunken in.

His brow is deeply lined with thought, his head is highly domed;

His coat is dusty from neglect, his whiskers are uncombed.

He sways his head from side to side, with movements like a snake;

And when you think he's half asleep, he's always wide awake.

Macavity, Macavity, there's no one like Macavity,
For he's a fiend in feline shape, a monster of depravity.

You may meet him in a by-street, you may see him in the square —

But when a crime's discovered, then Macavity's not there!

He's outwardly respectable. (They say he cheats at cards.)

And his footprints are not found in any file of Scotland Yard's.

And when the larder's looted, or the jewel-case is rifled,

Or when the milk is missing, or another Peke's been stifled,

Or the greenhouse glass is broken, and the trellis past repair —

Ay, there's the wonder of the thing! Macavity's not there!

And when the Foreign Office find a Treaty's gone astray,

Or the Admiralty lose some plans and drawings by the way,

There may be a scrap of paper in the hall or on the stair —

But it's useless to investigate — Macavity's not there!

And when the loss has been disclosed, the Secret Service say:

'It must have been Macavity!' — but he's a mile away.

You'll be sure to find him resting, or a-licking of his thumbs,

Or engaged in doing complicated long division sums.

Macavity, Macavity, there's no one like Macavity,
There never was a Cat of such deceitfulness and suavity.

He always has an alibi, and one or two to spare:
At whatever time the deed took place — MACAVITY WASN'T THERE!

And they say that all the Cats whose wicked deeds are widely known

(I might mention Mungojerrie, I might mention Griddlebone)

Are nothing more than agents for the Cat who all the time

Just controls their operations: the Napoleon of Crime!

(By T.S. Eliot)