# THE POETRY AND MEMORY PROJECT QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you very much for your interest in this research.

This questionnaire is for people who:

* are aged eighteen years or over
* are resident in the UK
* have at least one poem that they know by heart

**A poem you know by heart** can be any poem that you would be able to say from memory. It doesn't matter if you have forgotten a few of the words – as long as you can remember most of it. It can be any type of poem, but *not* song lyrics or a nursery rhyme.

The time it takes to complete this questionnaire depends on how long you spend telling us about your poem – and do tell me as much or as little time as you like.

## What’s in the survey

The survey has four sections:

1. Some general questions about when and where you have learned poetry

2. The main part of the survey, where we ask you to tell us about a poem you know by heart

3. Two questions about your attitude to learning poetry

4**.** Some questions about you

**Completing the survey**

Some questions ask you to write an answer rather than simply ticking a box. Please feel free to type in as much further information as you wish.

## Submitting the survey

When you have completed the survey, please email it to me, Debbie Pullinger, at dp371@cam.ac.uk

**How I will use the information**

All the information gathered in this survey will be held in strictest confidence, and in anonymous form. The data may be used in reporting the research, but any references to individual responses will be completely anonymous – unless I have gained your express permission to identify you.

QUESTIONNAIRE

**Section 1. WHEN AND WHERE YOU HAVE LEARNED POETRY**

**1. Did you learn any poetry by heart as a child?**Count any poem you learned up to the time you left school – but do not include nursery rhymes or song lyrics.

☐ Yes

☐ No

*If your answer was ‘No’, go straight to question 4.*

**2. Where did you learn poetry as a child?**Check all that apply.

☐ In primary school

☐ In secondary school

☐ Not in school

**3. What were your reasons for learning poetry as a child?**Tick all that apply.

☐ Because a teacher required or suggested that I learn it

☐ Because a parent or other relative required or suggested that I learn it

☐ To perform at a public event – for example, a competition or festival

☐ To recite at a social occasion – for example, a wedding or funeral

☐ Because I chose to learn it myself

☐ Other – please give details

**4. Have you learned any poetry by heart as an adult?**Count any poem you learned after the time you left school, even if you cannot remember it now. But do not include song lyrics.

☐ Yes

☐ No

*If your answer was ‘No’, go straight to question 6.*

**5. What were your reasons for learning poetry as an adult?**Tick all that apply.

☐ For personal pleasure

☐ As a personal challenge

☐ To perform at a public event – for example, a competition or festival

☐ To recite at a social occasion – for example, a wedding or funeral

☐ For professional purposes – for example, working as a professional actor or voice artist

☐ Other – please give details

**6. Approximately how many poems do you know by heart?**

☐ 1

☐ 2–5

☐ 5–10

☐ 10–50

☐ More than 50

**Section 2. YOUR MEMORISED POEM**

**7. Please tell us one poem that you know by heart.**   
If you know more than one, then choose the poem that has most meaning for you.

Poem title:

Name of poet (if known):

**8. How old were you when you learned this poem?**

☐ Under 5 years

☐ 5–10 years

☐ 10-15 years

☐ 15–20 years

☐ 20–25 years

☐ Over 25 years

☐ Can't remember

**9. Where did you learn this poem?**

☐ In primary school

☐ In secondary school

☐ On a course in higher education

☐ Not in school or higher education

☐ Can't remember

**10. What were your reasons for learning this poem?**   
Tick all that apply.

☐ Because a teacher required or suggested that I learn it

☐ Because a parent or other relative required or suggested that I learn it

☐ To perform at a public event – for example, a competition or festival

☐ To recite at a social occasion – for example, a wedding or funeral

☐ For professional purposes – for example, working as a professional actor or voice artist

☐ For personal pleasure

☐ As a personal challenge

☐ Other – please give details

**11. Please tell us your thoughts and/or feelings about this poem.**

**If the poem is particularly significant for you, please tell us why.**

Write as much or as little as you like.

**12. Is there particular line (or lines) which has special significance for you?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

*If your answer was ‘No’, go straight to question 15.*

**13. Which line (or lines) is it?**

**14. Please tell us why this line (or lines) is significant for you.**

Write as much or as little as you like.

**15. Has the way you feel about or understand this poem changed over time?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

*If your answer was ‘No’, go straight to question 17.*

**16. Please tell us how your feelings or understanding have changed over time.**

Write as much or as little as you like.

**Section 3. YOUR ATTITUDE TO LEARNING POETRY**

**17. Which phrases most closely express your feelings about knowing poetry by heart?**   
Tick all that apply.

Knowing a poem by heart …

☐ helps me understand the poem better

☐ helps me appreciate the poem more

☐ helps with being able to express ideas

☐ is good for making connections between things

☐ gives me a source of comfort in tough times

☐ gives me confidence that I am able to remember things generally

☐ is good for being able to play with language

☐ makes no difference to me in any way

**18. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**   
Please choose from:

A Strongly disagree

B Disagree

C Neither agree nor disagree

D Agree

E Strongly agree

"Learning poetry by heart is valuable" \_\_\_\_

"Learning poetry should be part of the school curriculum" \_\_\_\_

**19. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about your experience of learning poetry or reciting poetry?**

**Section 4. ABOUT YOU**

We will now ask for some personal details which will help us to analyse our data. All your answers will be kept confidential.

**20. Are you:**

☐ Male ☐ Female

**21. In what year were you born?**

**22. What is your nationality?**

☐ British

☐ Irish

☐ Other – please specify

**23. How would you describe your cultural background?**   
Check all that apply.

☐ English

☐ Scottish

☐ Welsh

☐ Northern Irish

☐ Irish

☐ Other – please specify

**24. In which country did you go to school?**   
If you went to school in more than country, please select the one where you spent greatest part of your schooling.

☐ England

☐ Scotland

☐ Wales

☐ Northern Ireland

☐ Ireland

☐ Other – please specify

**25. Where do you live now?**

☐ England ☐ Ireland

☐ Scotland ☐ Northern Ireland

☐ Wales ☐ Other – please specify

**26. Which educational qualifications have you completed?**   
Tick all that apply.

☐ School qualifications

☐ Undergraduate degree

☐ Postgraduate degree

☐ Professional qualification

**27. What is, or has been, your main occupation?**

**28. Finally, would you be willing for me to contact you to follow up on some on these questions?**

**END OF SURVEY**

Thank you very much! I greatly appreciate your time and effort in responding to this survey.

Please email your completed form to me at dp371@cam.ac.uk