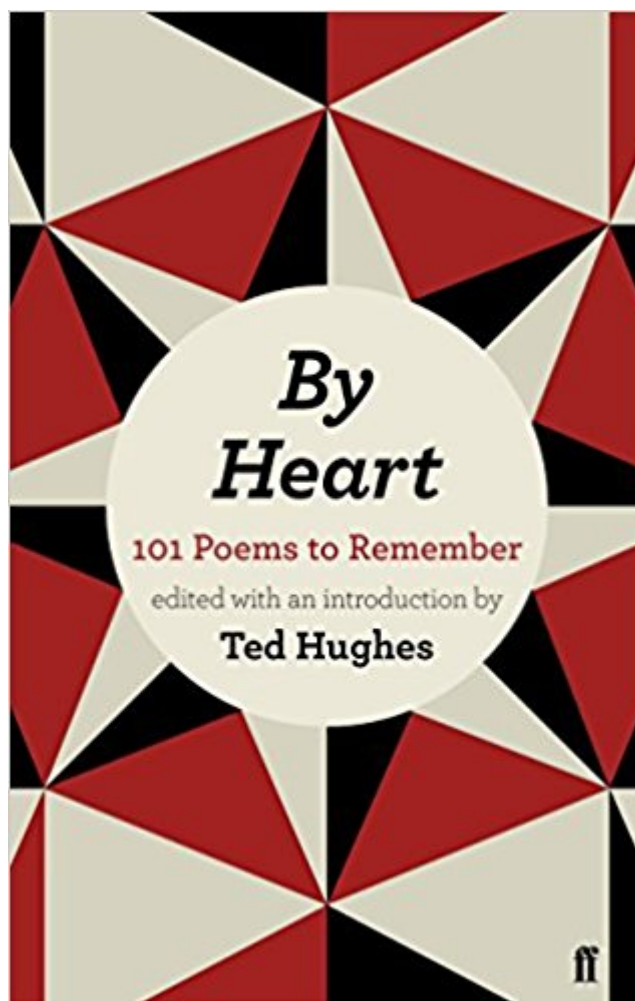


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By Heart: 101 Poems To Remember



Synopsis

What has happened to the lost art of memorising poems? Why do we no longer feel that it is necessary to know the most enduring, beautiful poems in the English language 'by heart'? In his introduction Ted Hughes explains how we can overcome the problem by using a memory system that becomes easier the more frequently it is practised. The collected 101 poems are both personal favourites and particularly well-suited to the method Hughes demonstrates. Spanning four centuries, ranging from Shakespeare and Keats through to Thomas Hardy and Seamus Heaney, *By Heart* offers the reader a 'mental gymnasium' in which the memory can be exercised and trained in the most pleasurable way. Some poems will be more of a challenge than others, but all will be treasured once they have become part of the memory bank. This edition is part of a series of anthologies edited by poets such as Don Paterson and Simon Armitage and features an attractive new design to complement an anthology of classic poems.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Ted Hughes (1930-1998) was born in Yorkshire. His first book, *The Hawk in the Rain*, was published in 1957 by Faber and Faber and was followed by many volumes of poetry and prose for adults and children, including *The Iron Man* (1968). He received the Whitbread Book of the Year for both *Tales from Ovid* (1997) and *Birthday Letters* (1998). He was Poet Laureate from 1984, and in 1998 he was appointed to the Order of Merit.

It's clear that the editor, Ted Hughes, gave this selection a good deal of thought. The selection was

a search to find poems of suitable length for and worthy of memorization. So the term "by heart" functions both in the sense of knowing by memory and feeling something deeply. Anyway, you will find many poems you will want to know by heart: "Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone", "There's a certain Slant of light", "Fear no more the heat o' the Sun" for example, excellent works. Lots of Shakespeare and Yeats, Blake and Dickinson. He has also included Hamlet's "To be..." and Macbeth's "Tomorrow and tomorrow..." Now that the internet has replaced individual mental retention, I suppose this book seems anachronistic, which is too bad. The great English poems are among the few mental constructs that will have seemed worth preserving in the future. Furthermore, the capability to remember something exactly is a real gift. Memorization is a mental capacity that is being lost, so too the ability to contemplate. The slowing down to contemplate a subject, which poetry invites us to do, is important if there is ever to be an American civilization. Life without it is quite stupid, not to say exhausting. Having done this for a while, i.e. memorize poems I love, I can testify to the worthiness of it, not for recitation purposes (no one wants to listen), but because it's a way to knowing the work and the poet more intimately and because it becomes part of you. You finally have something good up there. It's probably good for the brain as well: poor, distracted thing. Hughes provides hints on memorization in the introduction, which is somewhat useful, but you have to find your own method, make your own memory palace. The selection of poems is excellent.

I wanted to start memorizing more poems, and this book is such a great place to start for that. Probably the best place, in fact, for that sort of thing.

Thank you!

an excellent compilation.

I deleted the review I wrote earlier, it doesn't seem so important to me now whether people memorize these old, great poems, or even read them. I don't think mankind is going to improve itself, it will be exactly the way it is, some people will like these poems and many won't even think about them, and some will feel obligated to pretend to like them, and the world will continue to rotate. In the ideal world toward which we were tending years ago, these well brewed thoughts and feelings would be installed in the minds of everyone I suppose. Personally, I wish everyone was inclined to see life the way Shakespeare and Dickinson did. But everyone's not going to.

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