

u3a talk
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The Memorised Poem
Catherine Robson, author

Memorising long stretches of verse used to be a fixed part of school life in both Britain and the United States, but this practice ended long ago. This talk explains how poetry recitation came to assume such a central place in past curricular programs and then focuses on when and why the once mandatory exercise declined. Our speaker will be telling the story of a lost schoolroom activity and its wide-ranging effects on two sides of the Atlantic. The talk further explores how recitation altered the lives of ordinary people who committed poems to heart and changed the worlds in which they lived.

The speaker is a professor at New York University, the author of *Heart Beats: Everyday Life and the Memorized Poem*, and co-editor of *The Victorian Age*, *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*.