

# Introduction

## Middle English poetry unit: *The Tyger*, *The Rose* and *The Pleasure Dome*

This unit of three programmes in the Middle English series for 11 – 14 year olds presents examples of work from pre-twentieth century poets. From Romantic poetry to Victorian verse, the programmes aim to make meaning more accessible by placing the poems in an identifiable context and offering some comparative study with twentieth century poets.

The poems included in the Guide have been extracted from a number of different sources. It is worth noting that the same poem can vary in words and punctuation according to which version of book and which year they are printed in. A complete list of poems, in the order that they are shown in the programmes, is given on page two, together with details of the books they have been taken from.

### The Study Guide

The Study Guide, which is intended for use with pupils, is in three sections – one per programme, and these are sub-divided into themes. The great majority of poems seen in the programmes are printed in the Study Guide and these include a short biography of the pre-twentieth century poets, together with suggested activities for the pupils, designed to extend their ideas and understanding. The pupil pages are photocopiable and can be worked on individually, in groups or as a whole class.

### The Tyger: poetry about the natural world

This programme presents the work of a variety of poets who have tried to capture the world of nature in words. It takes the form of a day out in the country with a group of young people during which they experience the thoughts and emotions that have led poets to write about nature.

Pupils are encouraged to think about why, throughout the ages, poets have been fascinated by nature. Indeed, many poets have devoted their lives to describing the world around them. What is it that makes nature so attractive to poets?

N.B. *The Tyger* p6. You might like to stop the video to allow the class to discuss the poem themselves.

### The Rose: poetry about romantic love

This programme begins with stereotypical images of romantic love but soon moves into the more realistic world of teenage relationships. We follow a teenage couple, Mary and Jim, as they pass through the various stages of a love affair, from infatuation to

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### Subtitles

All **Channel 4** series for schools are subtitled on Teletext for the deaf and hearing-impaired.

companionship. Through the poetry, we understand the need to conform to the romantic ideal of love and how it often clashes with reality.

It would be helpful for the pupils to have some background understanding of the social and literary conventions which operated in the nineteenth century and the tradition of Romantic poetry.

N.B. *Love's Philosophy* p10. This activity is best carried out before students watch the programme.

### The Pleasure Dome: poetry about magic places

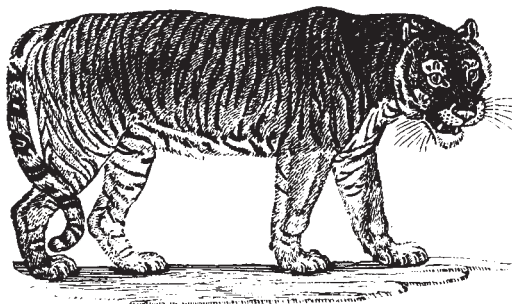
This programme begins on the beach, the central image being one of the sea. It explores the importance of a sense of place in the poetic imagination, and takes the viewer on a journey through the thoughts and dreams of a variety of poets. The diversity of poems bring to life imaginary places and enchanted scenes on both a literal and metaphysical level.

N.B. *Kubla Khan* p17. The suggested pupil activity is best carried out before hearing the poem or watching the programme.

**Please note** None of the animals featured in programme one were injured or mistreated during filming

# Contents

Poems featured in the poetry unit: The Tyger, The Rose and The Pleasure Dome



## Programme 1: The Tyger

*A Cat* by Edward Thomas.

*Leisure* by William Henry Davies.

*A Creed* by Norman Gale.

*Flying Crooked* by Robert Graves.

*A Narrow Fellow in the Grass* by Emily Dickinson.

*There was a Boy* by William Wordsworth.

*The Tyger* by William Blake.

*My Praying Mantis* by John Lyons.

*The Badger* by John Clare.

*Cuckoo Song (Sumer is icumen in)* Anon 13th century.



## Programme 2: The Rose

*Love's Philosophy* by Percy Bysshe Shelley.

*Kiss an' Tell* by Benjamin Zephaniah.

*Going for the Milk* by Mary Webb.

*I Do Not Love Thee* by Caroline Elizabeth Sarah Norton.

*Upon Julia's Clothes* by Robert Herrick.

*Eastern Senses* by Selina Deen.

*A Red Red Rose* by Robert Burns.

*Kissing Asians* by Saqib Deshmukh.

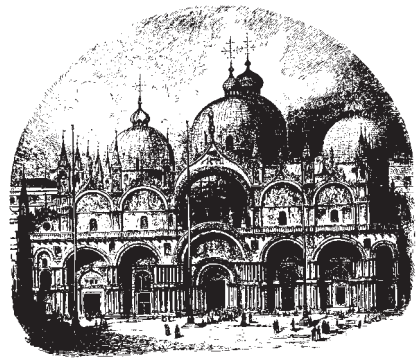
*Love Without Hope* by Robert Graves.

\**Valentine* by Wendy Cope.

*Love and Friendship* by Emily Jane Bronte.

\**Sonnets from the Portuguese XLIII* by Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

*Remember* by Christina Rossetti.



## Programme 3: The Pleasure Dome

*"maggie and milly and molly and may"*

by E.E. Cummings.

*Where the Picnic Was* by Thomas Hardy.

*Kubla Khan* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

*Sea Timeless Song* by Grace Nichols.

*Jerusalem* by William Blake.

*Upon Westminster Bridge* by William Wordsworth.

\**The Fringe of the Sea* by A.L. Hendriks.

*Ozymandias* by Percy Bysshe Shelley.

*Our Revels Now Are Ended* by William Shakespeare.  
From 'The Tempest.'

\* not included in the Study Guide.

# The Tyger: poetry about the natural world

## 1 Observing and describing nature

The poets in this section are fascinated by the natural world and feel that it is important not to take nature for granted. They look closely and describe what they see.

**Edward Thomas** (1878–1917) was a journalist and author of nature books. He did not begin to write poetry until he struck up a friendship with the American poet Robert Frost in 1912 and even then, only published his poetry under a pseudonym. He was killed during the First World War in France. Most of his poems were published after his death.

### A Cat

*She had a name among the children;  
But no one loved though someone owned  
Her, locked her out of doors at bedtime  
And had her kittens duly drowned.*

*In Spring, nevertheless, this cat  
Ate blackbirds, thrushes, nightingales,  
And birds of bright voice and plume and flight,  
As well as scraps from neighbours' pails.*

*I loathed and hated her for this;  
One speckle on a thrush's breast  
Was worth a million such; and yet  
She lived long, till God gave her rest.*

Edward Thomas

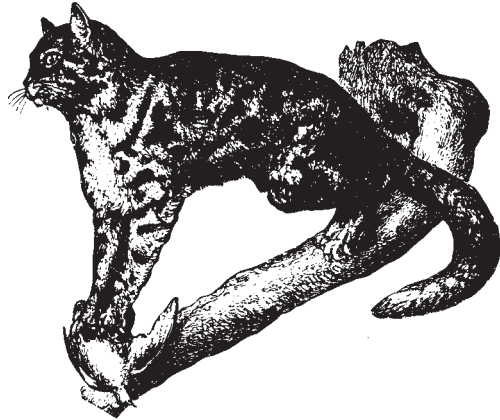
a When you have read this poem carefully, look at the statements below:

- ◆ The poem is called *A Cat* not *The Cat*
- ◆ The cat is never described
- ◆ We know the cat had a name but Thomas does not tell us what it is
- ◆ Thomas describes the birds that the cat ate

b Discuss the sort of attitude you think the poet has to this cat.

c Now look for all the **verbs** that Thomas uses to describe how the cat was treated. For instance, 'But no one **loved** though someone **owned**'.

Make a list of the verbs. What do they tell us about the relationship between this cat and people?



**William Henry Davies** (1871–1940) spent much of his life as a tramp. He made his way to New York (USA) from his birthplace of Newport, Monmouthshire and worked as a casual labourer and beggar, often spending time in prison. He is most famous for his book *Autobiography of a Supertramp* in which he described his adventures.

### Leisure

*What is this life if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare?*

*No time to stand beneath the boughs  
And stare as long as sheep or cows:*

*No time to see, when woods we pass,  
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass:*

*No time to see, in broad daylight,  
Streams full of stars, like skies at night:*

*No time to turn at Beauty's glance,  
And watch her feet, how they can dance:*

*No time to wait till her mouth can  
Enrich that smile her eyes began?*

*A poor life this if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare.*

William Henry Davies

a Having read the short biography of Davies' life, what do you think is the connection between the kind of life he led and the ideas expressed in the poem?

b What is the pattern of rhyming in this poem? What sort of feeling does the pattern of rhyme give the poem?

c Do you think we should have more time to 'stand and stare'? Give reasons why you agree or disagree with the poem.

Norman Gale (no biography)

## A Creed

*How sweet the hedge that hides  
a cunning nest,  
And curtains off a patient  
bright-eyed thrush,  
With five small worlds beneath  
her mottled breast!  
At last the thin blue veils are  
backward furled,  
Existence wakes and pipes  
into a bird,  
As infant music bursts  
into the world.*



Norman Gale

- a When you have read the poem carefully, look up the word **creed** in a dictionary. What does the title say about the poem? Try making up different titles for the poem. If you find one that works better, say why.
- b Which words does the poem use to describe: the thrush's eggs, the baby birds' eyelids and the baby birds' cheeping?
- c Look again at the poem and, with a partner, reduce it to a skeleton which includes the most important **nouns** and **verbs** so that the poem begins: 'The hedge hides a nest.....'

**Robert Graves** (1895–1985) made his name as a historical novelist as well as a poet. He served in the army during the First World War. In 1929 he emigrated to Majorca. He became Professor of Poetry at Oxford University in 1961. He has written novels and books on mythology, as well as poems.

## Flying Crooked

*The butterfly, a cabbage-white,  
(His honest idiocy of flight)  
Will never now, it is too late,  
Master the art of flying straight,  
Yet has – who knows so well as I? –  
A just sense of how not to fly:  
He lurches here and here by guess  
And God and hope and hopelessness.  
Even the aerobic swift  
Has not his flying-crooked gift.*



Robert Graves

- a Is this poem about butterflies or people? Give your reasons.
- b Why do you think that Graves regards the butterfly's crooked flight as a 'gift'?
- c What would be the difference in behaviour: at school / at work / in relationships, of people who 'fly straight' and those who 'lurch here and here'?

**Emily Dickinson** (1830–1886) was an American poet. She was the daughter of a lawyer and lived a very secluded life after the age of 30. She wrote many letters and over 1700 poems, mostly on the themes of love, death and nature; only seven were published in her lifetime.

## A Narrow Fellow in the Grass

*A narrow fellow in the grass  
Occasionally rides;  
You may have met him, – did you not?  
His notice sudden is.*

*The grass divides as with a comb,  
A spotted shaft is seen;  
And then it closes at your feet  
And opens further on.*

*He likes a boggy acre  
A floor too cool for corn.  
Yet when a boy, and barefoot,  
I more than once, at noon*



*Have passed, I thought, a whip-lash  
Unbraiding in the sun, –  
When, stooping to secure it,  
It wrinkled, and was gone.*

*Several of nature's people  
I know, and they know me;  
I feel for them a transport  
Of cordiality;*

*But never met this fellow  
Attended, or alone,  
Without a tighter breathing,  
And zero at the bone.*

Emily Dickinson

- a Look closely at the first three stanzas. In simple words, write down what you think is going on in this poem.
- b Practise reading the poem aloud, taking particular note of the punctuation. What do you notice about the way the language changes to give a sense of the snake?

## 2 Our relationship with nature

These poems look at the ways in which our imagination is fuelled by our relationship with nature. Before looking at the poems, think about why people feel that they need to be in contact with nature, for example, walking in the park or having a day out in the country.

**William Wordsworth** (1770–1850) is probably one of the most famous of all English nature poets. He grew up in the Lake District and many of his poems celebrate the beauty of this part of the country. He was particularly influenced by his childhood experiences and often felt that adulthood led to a dulling of his senses. The following poem comes from *The Prelude* in which he writes about his childhood experiences.

### **There was a Boy**

*There was a Boy: ye knew him well, ye cliffs  
And islands of Winander! – many a time  
At evening, when the earliest stars began  
To move along the edges of the hills,  
Rising or setting, would he stand alone  
Beneath the trees or by the glimmering lake,  
And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands  
Pressed closely palm to palm, and to his mouth  
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,  
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,  
That they might answer him; and they would shout  
Across the watery vale, and shout again,  
Responsive to his call, with quivering peals,  
And long halloos and screams, and echoes loud  
Redoubled and redoubled, concourse wild  
Of jocund din; and, when a lengthened pause  
Of silence came and baffled his best skill,  
Then sometimes, in that silence while he hung  
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise  
Has carried far into his heart the voice  
Of mountain torrents; or the visible scene  
Would enter unawares into his mind,  
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,  
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven, received  
Into the bosom of the steady lake....*

William Wordsworth

a Here is a simple but unfinished prose version of the poem. Finish this off by completing the final sentence.

**There was a boy who used to go into the hills in the evening. He would imitate the sounds of owls and sometimes they would answer him. At other times, though .....**

b The prose version above tells us what happens in the poem but it leaves out all the things that make it a poem. With a partner, choose five words or phrases that you feel are especially poetic. Compare your choices with other groups.



**William Blake** (1757–1827) was a visionary poet who, like Wordsworth, was very influenced by the events of the French Revolution (1789). He lived his formative years in London. He never went to school and was taught by his mother. He loved reading. At the age of fourteen, he was apprenticed to an engraver and learned to draw. Blake was both poet and artist, so his poems were fully illustrated. He was thought by some to be mad, perhaps because he questioned everything about poetry, art, religion and philosophy.

## The Tyger

*Tyger! Tyger! burning bright  
In the forests of the night,  
What immortal hand or eye  
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?*

*In what distant deeps or skies  
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?  
On what wings dare he aspire?  
What the hand, dare seize the fire?*

*And what shoulder, and what art,  
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?  
And when thy heart began to beat,  
What dread hand? and what dread feet?*

a *The Tyger* is a great poem for reading aloud. With a small group, devise a reading that you can perform to the class. Orchestrate the poem, using all the voices in your group.

b All the poems you have read so far are attempts to describe or comment on things that the poet had seen. However, as far as we know, Blake had never seen an actual tiger. What difference might this make to your reading of the poem?

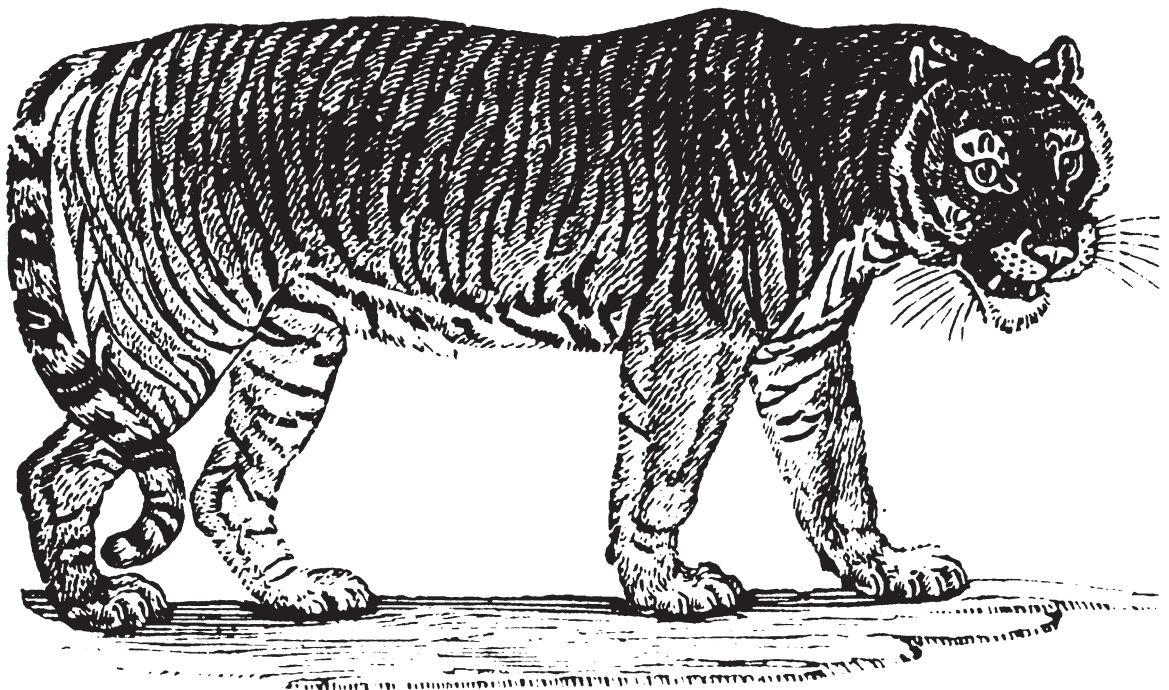
c Imagine an interview with William Blake. Write a list of questions that you would ask him about this poem.

*What the hammer? what the chain?  
In what furnace was thy brain?  
What the anvil? what dread grasp  
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?*

*When the stars threw down their spears,  
And water'd heaven with their tears,  
Did he smile his work to see?  
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?*

*Tyger! Tyger! burning bright  
In the forests of the night,  
What immortal hand or eye,  
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?*

William Blake



John Lyons (contemporary)

## My Praying Mantis

*I once had a mantis as a pet.  
A praying mantis, you must not forget,  
is the tiger of the insect world,  
hungry, fierce and extremely bold;  
and if you are an insect, keep away  
should a mantis be lurking where you play.  
Anyway, my mantis was my very best friend,  
He sat on my shoulder, and I did defend  
his insect's right to stay with me,  
protect him from people's curiosity;  
for they thought it very strange  
the way his body was arranged.  
For a start, his neck was very long,  
and his heart-shaped head did not belong*

*to that thin neck and bulbous abdomen  
or toothed arms as strong as ten,*

*wings which gave him speed in flight  
when he attacked and with delight*

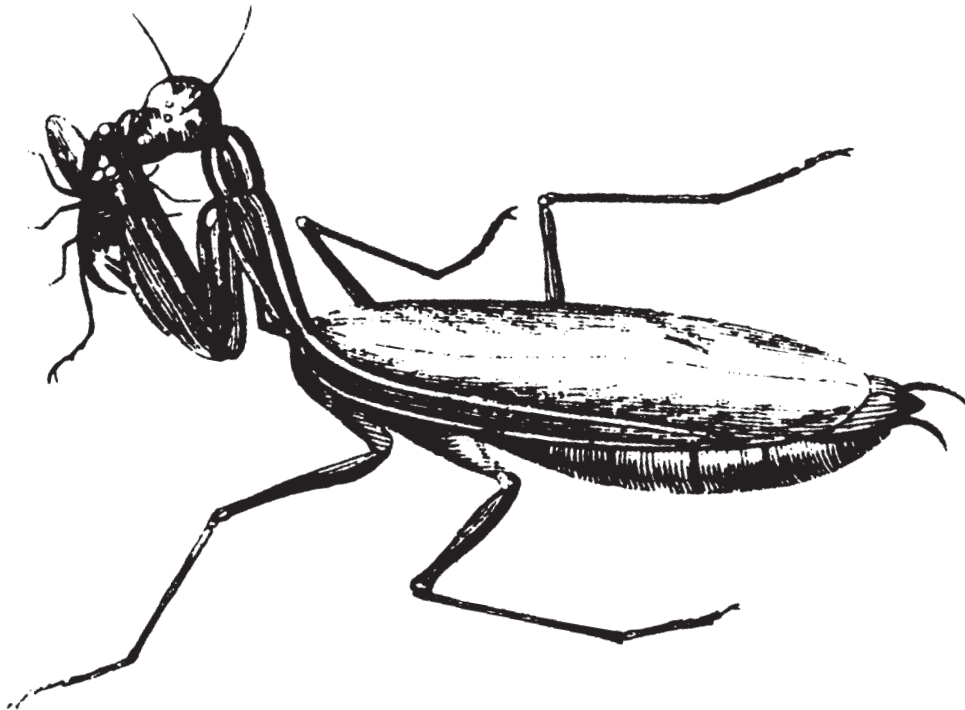
*grabbed a cockroach for his supper,  
tore and ate it with his choppers.*

*However, one day, Phoebe, the neighbour's cat,  
gobbled up my mantis and that was that.*

*Phoebe licked her lips, seemed satisfied  
with a chewed-up mantis in her inside.*

*I suppose, for a mantis, the moral to this story  
is, look out for cats or you'll be sorry.*

John Lyons



- a Describe what you think is going on in this poem. What is the tone of the poem? Is it bitter, ironic, sad, mocking or something else?
- b Compare this poem with *A Cat* by Edward Thomas. What are the similarities and what are the differences between the two poems?

**John Clare** (1793–1864) was born and bred a countryman. He had only a basic education but learned to read and write and read anything he could lay his hands on. He started to scribble down poetry when he was thirteen. During his rather unhappy life he wrote some of the finest lyric nature poetry in English. However, he was prone to depression and spent a great deal of his life in lunatic asylums.

\*The lines in brackets are not included in the programme

## **The Badger**

\*[The badger grunting on his woodland track  
With shaggy hide and sharp nose scrowed with black  
Roots in the bushes and the woods and makes  
A great hugh burrow in the ferns and brakes  
With nose on ground he runs a awkward pace  
And anything will beat him in the race  
The shepherds dog will run him to his den  
Followed and hooted by the dogs and men  
The woodman when the hunting comes about  
Go round at night to stop the foxes out  
And hurrying through the bushes ferns and brakes  
Nor sees the many holes the badger makes  
And often through the bushes to the chin  
Breaks the old holes and tumbles headlong in.]

**When midnight comes a host of dogs and men  
Go out and track the badger to his den  
And put a sack within the hole and lye  
Till the old grunting badger passes bye**

\*[He comes and hears they let the strongest loose  
The old fox hears the noise and drops the goose  
The poacher shoots and hurrys from the cry  
And the old hare half wounded buzzes bye]  
**They get a forked stick to bear him down  
And clapt the dogs and bore him to the town  
And bait him all the day with many dogs  
And laugh and shout and fright the scampering  
hogs**

**He runs along and bites all he meets  
They shout and hollo down the noisy streets.**

\*[He turns about to face the loud uproar  
And drives the rebels to their very doors  
The frequent stone is hurled where ere they go  
When badgers fight and every ones a foe]  
**The dogs are clapt and urged to join the fray  
The badger turns and drives them all away**



**Though scarcely half as big dimute and small  
He fights with dogs for hours and beats them all  
The heavy mastiff savage in the fray  
Lies down and licks his feet and turns away  
The bull dog knows his match and waxes cold  
The badger grins and never leaves his hold  
He drives the crowd and follows at their heels  
And bites them through the drunkard swears and  
reels.**

**The frighted woman takes the boys away  
The blackguard laughs and hurrys on the fray  
He tries to reach the woods a awkward race  
But sticks and cudgels quickly stop the chace  
He turns agen and drives the noisey crowd  
And beats the many dogs in noises loud  
He drives away and beats them every one  
And then they loose them all and set them on  
He falls as dead and kicked by boys and men  
Then starts and grins and drives the crowd agen  
Till kicked and torn and beaten out he lies  
And leaves his hold and cackles groans and dies.**

\*[Some keep a baited badger tame as hog  
And tame him till he follows like the dog  
They urge him on like dogs and show fair play  
He beats and scarcely wounded goes away  
Lapt up as if asleep he scorns to fly  
And seizes any dog that ventures nigh  
Clapt like a dog he never bites the men  
But worrys dogs and hurrys to his den  
They let him out and turn a harrow down  
And there he fights the host of all the town  
He licks the patting hand and trys to play  
And never trys to bite or run away  
And runs away from noise in hollow trees  
Burnt by the boys to get a swarm of bees.]

John Clare

a You may notice that the version of *The Badger* printed here is different from the one used in the programme. It is quite a bit longer. Clare often wrote a number of different versions of his poems and, since his death, this poem has been published in a variety of versions. The additional lines have been bracketed so that you can see the differences. How do the differences change your reading of the poem? Which version would you choose to be published in an anthology?

b What do you think is Clare's attitude about badger baiting? Is he for or against it? Discuss this with a partner and support your view with evidence from the poem.

c You may have noticed that there is little punctuation in *The Badger*. Put in commas and full stops where you think they might go. What difference does this make to the way the poem is understood? Do you think that the lack of commas and full stops spoils the poem?

d Read the whole poem again. Write down what each of the following people do when the badger hunt is on: the woodman, the poacher, the woman, the blackguard.

## Cuckoo Song (Sumer is icumen in)

*Sumer is icumen in,*

*Lhude sing cuccu!*

*Groweth sed, and bloweth med,*

*And springeth the wude nu –*

*Sing cuccu!*

*Awe bleteth after lomb,*

*Louth after calf cu;*

*Bulluc sterteth, buck verteth,*

*Murie sing cuccu!*

*Cuccu, cuccu, well sings thu, cuccu;*

*Ne swike thu naver nu;*

*Sing cuccu nu, sing cuccu,*

*Sing cuccu, sing cuccu, nu!*

*Anon 13th century – earliest known English round*

a Write an up-to-date version of this poem/song, using language that we would use today.



# The Rose: poetry about romantic love

## I Love and Desire

This first section contrasts Shelley's romantic plea for a kiss with Zephaniah's light-hearted examination of what happens when desire is gratified.

**Percy Bysshe Shelley** (1792–1822) was a Romantic poet (see Byron and Wordsworth) who was a revolutionary and a political activist. He was expelled from Oxford. He went to live in Italy in 1818 and died in a drowning accident. In less than twelve years he had published over twenty books of poems, plays, romances and pamphlets.

a The poem below has some words missing. Fill in the gaps with words that you think have the right meaning, sometimes the words should rhyme.

### Love's Philosophy

The fountains ..... with the river  
 And the rivers with the Ocean,  
 The winds of Heaven ..... for ever  
 With a sweet emotion  
 Nothing in the world is .....;  
 All things by a law divine  
 In one another's being mingle  
 Why ..... I with thine?

See the mountains ..... high Heaven  
 And the waves clasp one another;  
 ..... sister flower would be forgiven  
 If it disdained its brother;  
 And the sunlight clasps the .....  
 And the moonbeams kiss the sea:  
 What are all these kissings worth  
 If thou kiss ..... me?

b When you are happy with your choices, compare them with other groups. Did you all choose similar words?

c With a partner, try to express the gist of the poem in a single sentence. You could begin with 'Shelley is saying .....

d Now read the original poem. How close were you?

## Love's Philosophy

*The fountains mingle with the river  
 And the rivers with the Ocean,  
 The winds of Heaven mix for ever  
 With a sweet emotion  
 Nothing in the world is single;  
 All things by a law divine  
 In one another's being mingle.  
 Why not I with thine?*

*See the mountains kiss high Heaven  
 And the waves clasp one another;  
 No sister flower would be forgiven*



*If it disdained  
 its brother;  
 And the sunlight  
 clasps the earth  
 And the  
 moonbeams  
 kiss the sea:  
 What are all these  
 kissings worth  
 If thou kiss not  
 me?*

Percy Bysshe Shelley

**Benjamin Zephaniah** (contemporary)

## Kiss an' Tell

*I kissed a girl  
 She nicked me tongue  
 It swept me off me feet  
 It blew the air from out of me lungs.  
 And me heart missed a beat.  
 Me liver quivered  
 Me legs shivered  
 Me head started swelling  
 Me eyes rolled black  
 Me back went crack  
 Then she started yelling  
 Clean your teeth!*



Benjamin Zephaniah

a This light-hearted look at the reality of teenage love needs to be read aloud. Work with a partner to devise a performance of the poem.

## 2 The girls' view of love

These two poems represent women's experience of love through the eyes of an old woman remembering her youthful love and through the mixed feelings of a young woman experiencing love (perhaps for the first time).

**Mary Webb** (1881–1927) a British novelist. She is best known for her tragic novels which were set in Shropshire. She became known when Stanley Baldwin, the prime minister, publicly praised her book, *Precious Bane*, in 1924.



### Going for the Milk

*Going for the milk –*

*A toddling child with skin like curds,  
On a May morning in a charm of birds:*

*Going for the milk*

*With laughing, teasing lads, at seventeen,  
With rosy cheeks and breast as soft as silk –  
Eh! what a mort of years between!*

*Going for the milk*

*Through my Jim's garden, past the bush o' balm,  
With my first baby sleeping on my arm:*

*It's fifty year, come Easter, since that day;  
The work'us ward is cold, my eyes be dim;  
Never no more I'll go the flowery way,  
Fetching the milk. I drink the pauper's skim,  
And mind me of those summer days, and Jim  
Telling me as my breast was soft as silk –  
And that first day I missed to fetch the milk.*

Mary Webb

**a** This poem is in the form of an old woman's memories of love. She sits in the workhouse and her mind drifts back into the past. What has changed for her? Do you think she is happy or sad? Give reasons.

**b** Read the poem again. This time, make a note of the lines where the age changes.

**Caroline Elizabeth Sarah Norton** (1808–1877) grand-daughter of the playwright Sheridan, married in 1827. She enjoyed success with her writing and earned a considerable amount of money which her husband thought should be his. She divorced him and made history by actively supporting the Married Women's Property Act. As a poet, Caroline Norton is largely forgotten but 'I Do Not Love Thee' was a popular anthology poem.

\*The lines in brackets are not included in the programme.

### I Do Not Love Thee

*I do not love thee! – no! I do not love thee!  
And yet when thou art absent I am sad;  
And envy even the bright blue sky above thee,  
Whose quiet stars may see thee and be glad.*

\*[I do not love thee! – yet, I know not why,  
Whate'er thou dost seems still well done, to me:  
And often in my solitude I sigh  
That those I do love are not more like thee!]

*I do not love thee! – yet, when thou art gone,  
I hate the sound (though those who speak be  
dear)*

*Which breaks the lingering echo of the tone  
Thy voice of music leaves upon my ear.*

*I do not love thee! – yet thy speaking eyes,  
With their deep, bright, and most expressive blue,  
Between me and the midnight heaven arise,  
Oftener than any eyes I ever knew.*

*I know I do not love thee! yet, alas!  
Others will scarcely trust my candid heart;  
And oft I catch them smiling as they pass,  
Because they see me gazing where thou art.*

Caroline Elizabeth Sarah Norton

**a** What do you think is behind the poet saying I do not love thee and then saying the opposite?

**b** This poem uses the conventions of the 19th century, for example, the use of thee, thou. Try to re-write the poem using contemporary language. How does the reading of it change when the language changes?



### 3 The boys' view of love

In this section of the programme, the poems are used to highlight the fact that attitudes to romantic love and the expression of sexual attraction have changed over time. Even today, not everyone expresses sexual attraction in the same way. Each culture has its own acceptable ways of behaving.

**Robert Herrick** (1591–1674) was a friend of poet and novelist Ben Jonson and other members of London's literary society. After graduating from Cambridge University, he became a vicar in Devon. He was influenced by classical literature.

#### *Upon Julia's Clothes*

*When as in silks my Julia goes,  
Then, then, methinks, how sweetly flows  
The liquefaction of her clothes!*

*Next when I cast mine eyes and see  
That brave vibration each way free,  
O, how that glittering taketh me!*

Robert Herrick

This is one of many poems that Herrick wrote either about or to 'Julia'. He may have had a girlfriend called Julia but it was the fashion then for poets to write about their girlfriends using another name (often of Greek or Roman origin).

- a Read the poem and think about how Julia might have looked in 1650. Make a storyboard of the poem set in this period.
- b Now imagine how Julia might look today, and what clothes she could be wearing. Make another storyboard version of this poem in modern times.



#### 4 Real love or ideal love?

The next three poems contrast the ideal world of romantic love with reality. In **A Red Red Rose**, Burns gives voice to the traditional romantic images of love. In **Kissing Asians** the physical expression of love is not as important as what's felt in the heart and **Love Without Hope** illustrates the clash between romantic yearning and real life.

**Robert Burns** (1756–1796) is probably the most famous Scottish poet. He wrote a large number of poems and songs in Scottish regional dialects. He spent most of his life as a farmer and was idolised by the fashionable society of Edinburgh who called him the 'Heavens-taught plowman'. In fact he was a well-read and educated man who resented this patronising attitude.

### A Red Red Rose

O my Luve's like a red, red rose,  
That's newly sprung in June;

O my Luve's like the melodie  
That's sweetly play'd in tune –



As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,  
So deep in luve am I;

And I will love thee still, my Dear,  
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my Dear,  
And the rocks melt wi' the sun:  
I will love thee still, my Dear,  
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only Love!  
And fare thee weel, a while!  
And I will come again, my Love,  
Tho' it were ten thousand mile!

Robert Burns

**a** You can hear Burns' Scottish dialect in the poem. Find any words or phrases that you think belong to his dialect. Can you work out what they mean?

**b** With a partner, collect as many images of romantic love as you can find in magazines. Then create a collage including the Burns poem.

**c** Write your own poem beginning 'My love is like...'. You could include some modern images, for example, 'My love is like a video-tape, full of images

of you...'. Here are some other images you could use: a computer, a sports car, a television, a telephone.

Saqib Deshmukh (contemporary)

### Kissing Asians

I had a thought once...

Blimey Saqib my old son

You never see Asians kissing

Do ya?

Then I thought more carefully...

Y'see,

Expressions of affection

Might be part of your code,

But expressions of love

Are one different thing though.

A kiss can be cold and callous,

An embrace too smothering,

Love is more than just affection.

It's about respect and dignity.

So next time

I see Kevin snogging,

Or Lucy necking Pete

I will snigger

'Cos my Asian secret's here

And goes everywhere with me.

'Cos my love will not be

A prison sentence

My love will set me free.

And the lack of

Kissing Asians

Will not be strange to me.

Saqib Deshmukh

**a** This poem and 'Eastern Senses' by Selina Deen are examples of Asian views of romantic love. Do you think that different cultures regard love differently?

**b** If your class includes a variety of cultures, how do they differ in their views of love and marriage?



**Robert Graves** (1895–1985) see biography notes in Programme One page 4



## Love Without Hope

*Love without hope, as when the young bird-catcher*

*Swept off his tall hat to the Squire's own daughter.*

*So let the imprisoned larks escape and fly  
Singing about her head, as she rode by.*

Robert Graves

**a** This short poem paints a picture of a scene to illustrate the idea of hopeless love. Each element carries meaning. Here are the components of the poem. With a partner, discuss what you think each of them represents. For example:

*The young bird-catcher represents a young man's desire to catch the bird of love*

The sweeping off of the tall hat represents .....

The squire's own daughter represents .....

The imprisoned larks represent .....

That she rode by represents .....

## 5 The Maturity of Love

The following poems present a more grown-up attitude towards relationships. They do contain passion, but it is more controlled and thoughtful.

**Emily Jane Bronte** (1818–1848) is best remembered for her novel *Wuthering Heights* which she published under the pseudonym Ellis Bell. She lived with her sisters Anne and Charlotte and her brother Branwell in seclusion in Yorkshire. All of them wrote poetry and prose. Anne, Charlotte and Emily produced a number of enormously popular novels (including *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*).

## Love and Friendship

*Love is like the wild rose briar,*

*Friendship, like the holly tree*

*The holly is dark when the rose briar blooms,  
But which will bloom most constantly?*

*The wild rose briar is sweet in spring,*

*Its summer blossoms scent the air*

*Yet wait till winter comes again*

*And who will call the wild-briar fair.*

*Then scorn the silly rose-wreath now*

*And deck thee with the holly's sheen*

*That when December blights thy brow*

*He still may leave thy garland green.*

Emily Jane Bronte



**a** 'Love is like the wild rose briar, Friendship like the holly tree'. Make a list under the headings 'Love' and 'Friendship' of the qualities of these two things. Use lines from the poem.

**b** With a partner, discuss what is being said about love and friendship. Do you agree with Brontë's views? What do you think she is saying about the experience of being in love?

**Christina Rossetti** (1830–1894) was born in London, the sister of the poet and artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti. She lived a secluded life, looking after her mother and giving herself to church work and devotional writing. She turned down a number of possible boyfriends on religious grounds. She was an invalid for many years until her death.

## Remember

*Remember me when I am gone away,  
Gone far away into the silent land;  
When you can no more hold me by the hand,  
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.  
Remember me when no more day by day,  
You tell me of our future that you planned:  
Only remember me: you understand  
It will be late to counsel then or pray.  
Yet if you should forget me for a while  
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:  
For if the darkness and corruption leave  
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,  
Better by far you should forget and smile  
Than that you should remember and be sad.*

Christina Rossetti

- a This poem is a plea to be remembered. But, Rossetti says, if remembering me is going to make you sad, I would rather you didn't. Write down the two lines in this poem that sum up this statement.
- b Many readers find this poem rather morbid. What do you think? Discuss this with a partner. Support your view with evidence.
- c Compare this poem with Mary Webb's *Going for the Milk* on page 11. Look for similarities and differences in language, form and feeling.



# The Pleasure Dome: poetry about magic places



## I The Beach

**E. E. Cummings** (1894 – 1962) was an American poet who is probably most famous for refusing to use capital letters in his poetry. He fought in the First World War and afterwards stayed in Paris, painting and writing poetry. He wrote a great deal of eccentric and often funny poetry, recognisable by its odd punctuation and typography.

### *maggie and milly and molly and may*

*maggie and milly and molly and may  
went down to the beach(to play one day)*

*and maggie discovered a shell that sang  
so sweetly she couldn't remember her troubles, and*

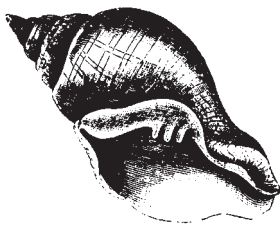
*milly befriended a stranded star  
whose rays five languid fingers were;*

*and molly was chased by a horrible thing  
which raced sideways while blowing bubbles:and*

*may came home with a smooth round stone  
as small as a world and as large as alone.*

*For whatever we lose(like a you or a me)  
it's always ourselves we find in the sea*

E.E. Cummings



**a** This is a good poem for reading aloud as a group. Prepare a reading to perform to the class that uses four or five voices.

**b** With a partner, invent a humorous poem about four boys who go mountaineering.

**Thomas Hardy** (1840 – 1928) is best known as a novelist. He wrote *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude The Obscure* amongst many others that have since become classics. However, in his later years he devoted himself entirely to poetry, much of it examining his past.

## Where the Picnic Was

*Where we made the fire  
In the summer time  
Of branch and briar  
On the hill to the sea,  
I slowly climb  
Through winter mire,  
And scan and trace  
The forsaken place  
Quite readily.  
Now a cold wind blows,  
And the grass is gray,  
But the spot still shows  
As a burnt circle – aye,  
And stick-ends, charred,  
Still strew the sward  
Whereon I stand,  
Last relic of the band  
Who came that day!  
Yes, I am here  
Just as last year,  
And the sea breathes brine  
From its strange straight line  
Up hither, the same  
As when we four came.  
- But two have wandered far  
From this grassy rise  
Into urban roar  
Where no picnics are,  
And one – has shut her eyes  
For evermore.*

Thomas Hardy

**a** Look carefully at the poem. You will notice that it sounds as if Hardy is speaking the poem to someone. What is it that gives this impression?

**b** Choose five words from each stanza that you think contribute most to the atmosphere of the poem. When you have chosen them, compare your choices with those of other groups.

**c** Look closely at the way that rhyme works in the poem. The first stanza uses this pattern: a, b, a, c, b, a, d, d, c. Now work out the rhyme pattern of the rest of the poem. Does it change? If so, why do you think Hardy changes it?

## 2 Places of the Imagination

**Samuel Taylor Coleridge** (1772–1834) was a contemporary and friend of William Wordsworth. He belongs to a group of poets known as the 'Romantics'. They believed, above everything, in the power of the imagination and the importance of poetry in expressing it. Coleridge suffered from a stomach complaint for which he took opium.

Before you read the poem, try an experiment. It is very important that you keep your ideas and your writing a secret while you are working on it, otherwise you will influence other people and they will influence you.

- a Take a piece of paper and imagine a strange city in a far-off land (it could be in a fairy-tale). Give it a name.
- b Imagine yourself walking through this city. Describe what it looks like, smells like, feels like. Make it as amazing as you can.
- c Now imagine an inhabitant of your city. Follow her/him. Describe what he or she is doing.

### ***Kubla Khan (or a vision in a dream)***

*In Xanadu did Kubla Khan*

*A stately pleasure dome decree:*

*Where Alph, the sacred river, ran*

*Through caverns measureless to man*

*Down to a sunless sea.*

*So twice five miles of fertile ground*

*With walls and towers were girdled round:*

*And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,*

*Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;*

*And here were forests ancient as the hills,*

*Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.*

*But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted*

*Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!*

*A savage place! as holy and enchanted*

*As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted*

*By woman wailing for her demon lover!*

*And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil*

*seething,*

*As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,*

*A mighty fountain momentarily was forced:*

*Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst*

*Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,*

*Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:*

*And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever*

*It flung up momentarily the sacred river.*

*Five miles meandering with a mazy motion*

*Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,*

*Then reached the caverns measureless to man,*

*And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:*

*And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far*

*Ancestral voices prophesying war!*

*The shadow of the dome of pleasure*

*Floated midway on the waves*

*Where was heard the mingled measure*

*From the fountain and the caves.*

*It was a miracle of rare device,*

*A sunny pleasure dome with caves of ice!*

*A damsel with a dulcimer*

*In a vision once I saw:*

*It was an Abyssinian maid,*

*And on her dulcimer she played,*

*Singing of Mount Abora.*

*Could I revive within me*

*Her symphony and song,*

*To such a deep delight 'twould win me,*

*That with music loud and long,*

*I would build that dome in air,*

*That sunny dome! those caves of ice!*

*And all who heard should see them there,*

*And all should cry, Beware! Beware!*

*His flashing eyes, his floating hair!*

*Weave a circle round him thrice,*

*And close your eyes with holy dread,*

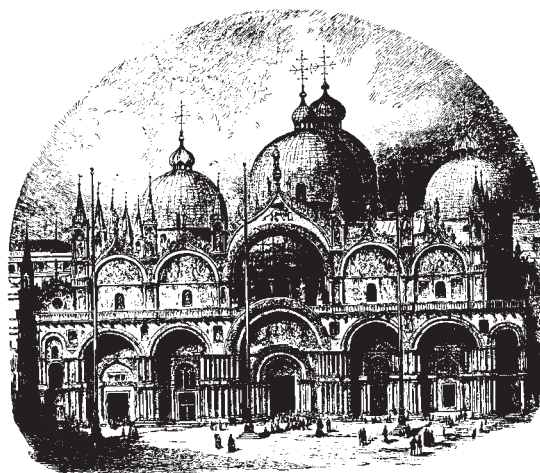
*For he on honey-dew hath fed,*

*And drunk the milk of Paradise.*

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

- d Now read 'Kubla Khan'. Coleridge is supposed to have dreamed the poem and written it down when he woke up. Because of this, it is full of bits and pieces that he had read about. Was your poem full of images from films and stories that you perhaps only dimly remember?

- e With a partner create a storyboard of one section of this poem.



**Grace Nichols** (contemporary)



\*The lines in brackets are not included in the programme

### **Sea Timeless Song**

*Hurricane come*

*and hurricane go*

*but sea – sea timeless*

*sea timeless*

*sea timeless*

*sea timeless*

*sea timeless*

\*[Hibiscus bloom

then dry – wither so

but sea timeless

sea timeless

sea timeless

sea timeless]

*Tourist come*

*and tourist go*

*but sea – sea timeless*

*sea timeless*

*sea timeless*

*sea timeless*

*sea timeless*

**Grace Nichols**

The idea that the sea is 'Timeless' is a very old one. Grace Nichols contrasts the timeless sea with all the things that come and go on a Caribbean island.

- Can you think of an image of something timeless in your own life? Does it have to be something from nature?
- When you have thought of something timeless, contrast it with images that are temporary, like Grace Nichols' hurricane, hibiscus bloom and tourist. Then create a poem using your images.

**William Blake** (1757–1827) See biography notes in Programme One, page 6

### **Jerusalem (from Milton)**

*And did those feet in ancient time*

*Walk upon England's mountains green?*

*And was the holy Lamb of God*

*On England's pleasant pastures seen?*

*And did the Countenance Divine*

*Shine forth upon our clouded hills?*

*And was Jerusalem builded here*

*Among these dark Satanic Mills?*

*Bring me my bow of burning gold!*

*Bring me my arrows of desire!*

*Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!*

*Bring me my chariot of fire!*

*I will not cease from mental fight,*

*Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,*

*Till we have built Jerusalem*

*In England's green and pleasant land.*

*William Blake*



This poem was set to music long after Blake's death and has become an alternative English national anthem. It is unlikely that Blake would have approved of the way his poem has been used, but who can tell?

- Try to speak the poem aloud. How different is the spoken version from the sung version? Which do you prefer and why?

**b** The Jerusalem of the title could be Blake's idea of the City of God, a sort of heaven on Earth. In the poem Blake tries to conjure up his vision of such a city. This poem seems influenced by The Book of Revelation in the New Testament. Here is an extract from Chapter 21. Make a list of all the similarities that you can find.

**Extract from the Book of Revelation  
(King James version) Chapter 21, verses 10-18**

10. *And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,*
11. *Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;*
12. *And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:*
13. *On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.*
14. *And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*
15. *And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.*
16. *And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth; and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.*
17. *And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.*
18. *And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.*

**c** What do you think a heavenly city might be like? Think about the way it would look and how people might live in it? If you live in a city, think about how the New Jerusalem would differ from it. Make a list of all the things that would be outlawed from your Jerusalem.

**William Wordsworth** (1770 –1850) See biography notes in Programme One, page 5.

Early in the morning of July 31st, 1802, Wordsworth and his sister crossed Westminster Bridge on the top of the coach from London to Dover. A month later, back at home in the Lake District, he wrote this sonnet.



**Upon Westminster Bridge**

*Earth has not anything to show more fair:  
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by  
A sight so touching in its majesty:  
This City now doth like a garment wear  
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,  
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie  
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;  
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.  
Never did sun more beautifully steep  
In his first splendour valley, rock, or hill;  
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!  
The river glideth at his own sweet will:  
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;  
And all that mighty heart is lying still!*

William Wordsworth

**a** Look carefully at the poem. You will notice that Wordsworth describes London as if it were a person. This technique is called personification. With a partner, look through the poem and find evidence of the technique.

**b** Towards the end of the poem, Wordsworth puts in three exclamation marks. Why do you think he used them? Would it change the poem if they were removed?

**c** This poem is an attempt to capture a moment of beauty. Wordsworth saw London stretched out before him in the early morning before people had got up. What effect does looking at the beauty of nature have on you? Make a list of things that you find beautiful.

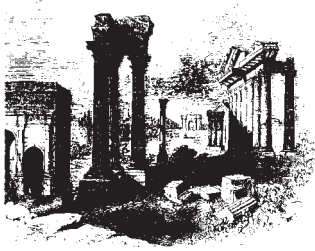
### 3 Time and Place

**Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822)** See biography notes in Programme Two page 10.

#### Ozymandias

a Before reading this poem, discuss the following with a partner. Which is most likely to survive the

longest?



- ◆ A song
- ◆ A car
- ◆ A king
- ◆ A building
- ◆ A sculpture
- ◆ A civilisation

b Put them in order of length of survival. When you are happy with your order, compare your list with those of other groups. Do you all agree? What questions did your discussions bring up?

c Now read the poem and see what Shelley is saying about things that survive.

#### Ozymandias

*I met a traveller from an antique land  
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,  
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless  
things,*

*The hand that mocked them, and the heart that  
fed:*

*And on the pedestal these words appear:  
“My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:  
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!”  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.*

Percy Bysshe Shelley

d Imagine that you are a sculptor and have just got the job of making a statue of Ozymandias, king of kings. Draw a picture of how your statue will look using the ideas from the poem.

**William Shakespeare (1564–1616)** is probably the most famous writer in history although he was not particularly well-known in his lifetime. He is better known for his plays (‘Romeo and Juliet’ and ‘Macbeth’ amongst others) than for his poetry. However, he did write a large number of poems and his plays are full of poetry.

#### Our revels now are ended

##### From *The Tempest* Act 4 Scene 1

William Shakespeare

The *Tempest* is a play set on an island ruled by a magician and his daughter. The following lines are spoken by Prospero, the magician, after he has summoned spirits to perform a play for his daughter’s wedding. In his speech, Prospero seems to be saying that all things must end, including our own lives.

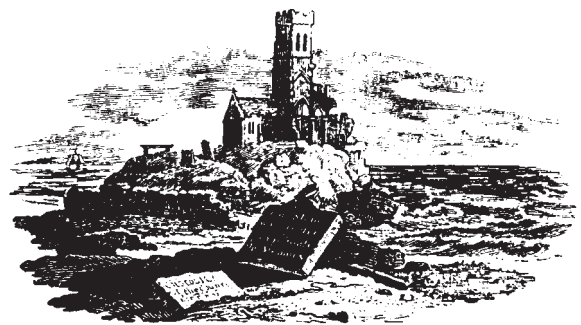
#### Our revels now are ended

##### From *The Tempest* Act 4 Scene 1

*Our revels now are ended. These our actors,  
As I foretold you, were all spirits and  
Are melted into air, into thin air:  
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capp’d towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack\* behind. We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep.*

William Shakespeare

\* rack means wreck or ruin.



- a What does this poem say to you?
- b Make a list of the words or descriptions that you like the sound of. What do you think they mean?

## Credits

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