

St Patrick's House Poetry Compilation

The History of English Poetry

Who was the very first poet?

Who made the very first rhyme?

We can't say that any of us know it

But if we travel backwards in time....

(Stone Age)

Ug, ooh, aah

AAH, OOH, UG!

(In poetic style)

Ug ug ug ug,

Ooo ooo ahhh ahhh

Ug ug ug ug

Goo goo gaah gaah

But poetry was tricky when no-one could read or write!

For many years, poems were told around the firelight.

Yet from the Anglo-Saxon age, some poems we do know.

'Beowulf' is the oldest of all of these, so back in time we go...

Anglo-Saxons

wæs se grimma gæst Grendel haten,

mære mearcstapa, se þe moras heold

fen ond fæsten; fifelcynnes eard

wonsæli wer weardode hwile

siþðan him Scyppend forscrifen hæfde.

If you don't speak Old English (and not too many of us do!)

Here's a modern translation, written just for you...

That grim spirit was called Grendel,
Famous waste-wanderer that held the moors
Fen and fastness; the land of the race of
monsters
The unhappy creature occupied for a while
After the Creator had condemned them

But times were changing... in 1066
The conquerors came and changed all of this.
Our language became infused with sounds
Of French and Latin all around.

Then Geoffrey Chaucer in later days
Wrote a poem about pilgrims on their way.
So to medieval times we go-
It's *Middle* English now you know!

Medieval

(No Middle English? Never mind
We've added a translation, as we're kind...)

Whan that Aprill with his shoures soote
When April with its sweet-smelling showers
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,
Has pierced the drought of March to the root,

And bathed every veyne in swich licour

And bathed every vein (of the plants) in such liquid
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
By which power the flower is created;

But by the time of Tudor rule

We start to hear poems we know from school.

We hear the language we're using still

And here to show us, some guy named Will...?

Shakespeare

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st;
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

And onwards to modern times we find

Poetry to move the mind,

Poetry to make us strong,

Poetry when the fight is long....

WW1:

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;

A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,

A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by the suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven

And now, the 21st century is here.

Poems to read and poems to hear.

Boundaries blurred between song and rhyme

As the power of poetry lasts for all time...

Rap Poetry

Bow! To the power of the Fundi-Fu
my broad sword pen cuts through
paper weight MCs who dare to test my title.

I'll have you in creases like origami
as you fall like a bungee jumper in the middle of my recital....

Biff! Bang! Wallop!

My Onomatopoeia has knocked you for six

Now you hide behind personification like a magician who's run out of tricks.

Many have challenged the Fundi-Fu
millions of Epitaphs bear their name.

I'm the Lip Hop grand master

All hail the king, is your only refrain.

From Saxons to Normans, from Tudors to now,

Poetry has power, poetry has 'wow!'

Where will it go next, after all it's been through?

What's the future of poetry? The future is YOU!