

265. In a Station of the Metro
 17. On First Looking into Chapman's Homer
 75. To Brooklyn Bridge
 267. A Supermarket in California
 32. When Icicles Hang by the Wall
 163. Lucy
 57. Fern Hill
 41. Delight in Disorder
 4. That Time of Year Thou Mayst in Me Behold
 47. Go, Lovely Rose
 5. Pied Beauty
 467. The Deserted Village
 60. The Collar
 81. Virtue
 29. "Because I could not stop for Death"
 100. The Listeners
 208. O Captain! My Captain!
 84. The Rime of the Ancient Mariner
 24. The Tiger
 1. The Ravens
 242. The Three Ravens
 195. The Waste
 423. Parting at Morning
 342. No Longer Mourn for
 197. My Mistress' Eyes
 334. Not Waving But Drowning
 450. Come unto These Yellow Sands
 83. Ode on the Death of a Favorite Cat, Drowned in a Tub of Gold Fishes

6. Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening
 That Good Night
 486. Remember
 19. The Second Coming
 8. Dover Beach
 500. Luke Havergal
 20. Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard
 51. And Did Those Feet in Ancient Times
 39. They Have Found Me That Sometimes
 96. The Eagle
 23. Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day?
 432. A Grave
 287. The Circus Animals' Desertion
 202. Peace
 50. London
 95. Ulysses
 19. The Second Coming
 8. Dover Beach
 500. Luke Havergal
 20. Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard
 51. And Did Those Feet in Ancient Times
 39. They Have Found Me That Sometimes
 96. The Eagle
 272. One Day I Wrote Her Name upon the Strand
 34. Love Bade Me Welcome
 65. Crossing the Bar
 70. When to the Sessions of Sweet Silent Thought
 13. Death, Be Not Proud
 42. I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud
 90. Go and Catch a Falling Star
 31. Anthem
 58. Adieu, Farewell, Earth's Bliss
 246. Sweetest
 233. Afterwards
 26. Ode to a Nightingale
 464. A Short Song of Congratulation
 232. When I Was One-pup-tyawl

The Top 500 Poems

WILLIAM HARMON

A COLUMBIA ANTHOLOGY

Edited by **WILLIAM HARMON** for Doomed Youth

T H E
T O P
5 0 0
P O E M S

Other Columbia University Press Books

The Concise Columbia Book of Poetry.

William Harmon, ed. (1990)

The Columbia History of the American Novel.

Emory Elliott, ed. (1991)

Columbia Literary History of the United States.

Emory Elliott, ed. (1988)

The Columbia Granger's® Index to Poetry.

Tenth Edition.

Edith P. Hazen, ed. (1994)

The Columbia Granger's® Dictionary of

Poetry Quotations.

Edith P. Hazen, ed. (1992)

The Columbia Granger's® Guide to

Poetry Anthologies.

William Katz and Linda Sternberg Katz, eds. (1990)

The Concise Columbia Encyclopedia, Second Edition.

(1989)

The Concise Columbia Dictionary of Quotations.

Robert Andrews, ed. (1990)

The Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literary and

Cultural Criticism.

Joseph Childers and Gary Hentzi, eds. (1995)

T H E
TOP
500
POEMS

EDITED
BY
WILLIAM
HARMON

A COLUMBIA ANTHOLOGY



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS
New York

Columbia University Press wishes to express its appreciation for assistance given by Corliss Lamont toward the costs of publishing this book.

Columbia University Press
New York Chichester, West Sussex
Copyright © 1992 Columbia University Press
All rights reserved

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
The Top 500 Poems / edited by William Harmon.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-0-231-08028-6

1. English poetry. 2. American poetry.

I. Harmon, William, 1938-

PR1175.C6417 1992

821.008—dc20

91-42239

CIP



Casebound editions of Columbia University Press books are printed on permanent and durable acid-free paper.

Printed in the United States of America

To
CAROLINE RUTH HARMON
for her third birthday

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THIS IS <i>It!</i>	1
ANONYMOUS (c.1250–c.1350)	
<i>Cuckoo Song</i>	7
GEOFFREY CHAUCER (c.1340–1400)	
<i>General Prologue to The Canterbury Tales</i>	8
ANONYMOUS (c.1400–c.1600)	
<i>Sir Patrick Spens</i>	10
<i>Western Wind</i>	14
<i>Edward, Edward</i>	15
<i>Thomas the Rhymer</i>	18
<i>The Wife of Usber's Well</i>	21
<i>As You Came from the Holy Land of Walsingham</i>	23
<i>Corpus Christi Carol</i>	25
<i>The Three Ravens</i>	26
<i>Tom o' Bedlam's Song</i>	28
<i>Adam Lay I-bounden</i>	31
<i>Lord Randal</i>	32
<i>The Cherry-Tree Carol</i>	33
<i>The Lord Is My Shepherd</i>	35
<i>I Sing of a Maiden</i>	36
<i>A Lyke-Wake Dirge</i>	37

Table of Contents

<i>Poor Soul, the Center of My Sinful Earth</i>	98
<i>Hark! Hark! the Lark</i>	99
<i>Take, O Take Those Lips Away</i>	100
<i>Farewell! Thou Art Too Dear for My Possessing</i>	101
<i>Where the Bee Sucks, There Suck I</i>	102
<i>When That I Was and a Little Tiny Boy</i>	103
<i>Full Many a Glorious Morning Have I Seen</i>	104
<i>No Longer Mourn for Me When I Am Dead</i>	105
<i>Tired with All These, for Restful Death I Cry</i>	106
<i>Like as the Waves Make towards the Pebbled Shore</i>	107
<i>When Daffodils Begin to Peer</i>	108
<i>How like a Winter Hath My Absence Been</i>	109
<i>Since Brass, nor Stone, nor Earth, nor Boundless Sea</i>	110
<i>Come Away, Come Away, Death</i>	111
<i>Come unto These Yellow Sands</i>	112
<i>Tell Me Where Is Fancy Bred</i>	113
THOMAS CAMPION (1567-1620)	
<i>My Sweetest Lesbia</i>	114
<i>Rose-cheeked Laura</i>	115
<i>There Is a Garden in Her Face</i>	116
<i>Thrice Toss These Oaken Ashes in the Air</i>	117
THOMAS NASHE (1567-1601)	
<i>Adieu, Farewell, Earth's Bliss</i>	118
<i>Spring, the Sweet Spring</i>	120
CHIDIOCK TICHBORNE (c.1568-1586)	
<i>Tichborne's Elegy</i>	121
SIR HENRY WOTTON (1568-1639)	
<i>On His Mistress, the Queen of Bohemia</i>	123

Table of Contents

JOHN DONNE (1572-1631)

<i>Death, Be Not Proud</i>	125
<i>Batter My Heart, Three-Person'd God</i>	126
<i>The Good Morrow</i>	127
<i>At the Round Earth's Imagined Corners</i>	128
<i>Go and Catch a Falling Star</i>	129
<i>The Sun Rising</i>	131
<i>A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning</i>	133
<i>A Hymn to God the Father</i>	135
<i>The Ecstasy</i>	136
<i>The Canonization</i>	139
<i>The Flea</i>	141
<i>Hymn to God My God, in My Sickness</i>	143
<i>Sweetest Love, I Do Not Go</i>	145
<i>A Nocturnal upon St. Lucy's Day, Being the Shortest Day</i>	147
<i>The Funeral</i>	149
<i>The Apparition</i>	150
<i>The Relic</i>	151
<i>Good Friday, 1613. Riding Westward</i>	153
<i>The Anniversary</i>	155

BEN JONSON (1572-1637)

<i>Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes</i>	157
<i>On My First Son</i>	158
<i>Hymn to Diana</i>	159
<i>Still to Be Neat</i>	160
<i>The Triumph of Charis</i>	161
<i>Epitaph on S. P.</i>	163
<i>Slow, Slow, Fresh Fount, Keep Time with My Salt Tears</i>	164
<i>Come, My Celia, Let Us Prove</i>	165
<i>To Penshurst</i>	166

JOHN WEBSTER (c.1578-c.1632)

<i>Call for the Robin Redbreast and the Wren</i>	170
--	-----

Table of Contents

WILLIAM BROWNE (c.1590-1645)	
<i>On the Countess Dowager of Pembroke</i>	171
ROBERT HERRICK (1591-1674)	
<i>To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time</i>	172
<i>Upon Julia's Clothes</i>	173
<i>Delight in Disorder</i>	174
<i>To Daffodils</i>	175
<i>The Argument of His Book</i>	176
<i>Corinna's Going a-Maying</i>	177
<i>The Night-Piece to Julia</i>	180
<i>Grace for a Child</i>	181
HENRY KING, BISHOP OF CHICHESTER (1592-1669)	
<i>Exequy on His Wife</i>	182
GEORGE HERBERT (1593-1633)	
<i>Love Bade Me Welcome</i>	186
<i>The Collar</i>	188
<i>Virtue</i>	190
<i>The Pulley</i>	191
<i>Redemption</i>	192
<i>Easter Wings</i>	193
<i>Jordan</i>	194
<i>Prayer the Church's Banquet</i>	195
THOMAS CAREW (1595-1639)	
<i>Ask Me No More Where Jove Bestows</i>	196
<i>To My Inconstant Mistress</i>	198
SIR WILLIAM DAVENANT (1606-1668)	
<i>The Lark Now Leaves His Watery Nest</i>	199
EDMUND WALLER (1606-1687)	
<i>Go, Lovely Rose</i>	200

Table of Contents

<i>On a Girdle</i>	202
JOHN MILTON (1608-1674)	
<i>Lycidas</i>	203
<i>On His Deceased Wife</i>	209
<i>On His Blindness</i>	210
<i>On the Late Massacre in Piedmont</i>	211
<i>L'Allegro</i>	212
<i>Il Penseroso</i>	217
SIR JOHN SUCKLING (1609-1642)	
<i>Why So Pale and Wan, Fond Lover?</i>	222
ANNE BRADSTREET (c.1612-1672)	
<i>To My Dear and Loving Husband</i>	223
RICHARD LOVELACE (1618-1658)	
<i>To Lucasta, Going to the Wars</i>	224
<i>To Althea, from Prison</i>	225
<i>The Grasshopper</i>	227
ANDREW MARVELL (1621-1678)	
<i>To His Coy Mistress</i>	229
<i>The Garden</i>	231
<i>The Definition of Love</i>	234
<i>Bermudas</i>	236
<i>An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland</i>	238
<i>The Picture of Little T. C. in a Prospect of Flowers</i>	242
<i>The Mower to the Glow-Worms</i>	244
<i>A Dialogue between the Soul and Body</i>	245
HENRY VAUGHAN (1622-1695)	
<i>The Retreat</i>	247

Table of Contents

<i>The World</i>	249
<i>They Are All Gone into the World of Light</i>	251
<i>Peace</i>	253
<i>The Night</i>	254
JOHN DRYDEN (1631-1700)	
<i>To the Memory of Mr. Oldham</i>	256
<i>Mac Flecknoe</i>	258
<i>A Song for St. Cecilia's Day, 1687</i>	265
<i>Alexander's Feast; or, The Power of Music</i>	268
EDWARD TAYLOR (c.1645-1729)	
<i>Huwifery</i>	275
JONATHAN SWIFT (1667-1745)	
<i>A Description of the Morning</i>	276
ALEXANDER POPE (1688-1744)	
<i>Know Then Thyself</i>	277
<i>Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot</i>	279
<i>An Essay on Criticism</i>	291
SAMUEL JOHNSON (1709-1784)	
<i>A Short Song of Congratulation</i>	312
<i>On the Death of Mr. Robert Levet, a Practiser in Physic</i>	314
<i>The Vanity of Human Wishes: The Tenth Satire of Juvenal Imitated</i>	316
THOMAS GRAY (1716-1771)	
<i>Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard</i>	327
<i>Ode on the Death of a Favorite Cat, Drowned in a Tub of Gold Fishes</i>	333

Table of Contents

WILLIAM COLLINS (1721-1759)	
<i>Ode to Evening</i>	335
<i>How Sleep the Brave</i>	337
OLIVER GOLDSMITH (c.1730-1774)	
<i>When Lovely Woman Stoops to Folly</i>	338
<i>An Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog</i>	339
<i>The Deserted Village</i>	341
WILLIAM COWPER (1731-1800)	
<i>Light Shining out of Darkness</i>	354
<i>The Poplar Field</i>	356
PHILIP FRENEAU (1752-1832)	
<i>The Indian Burying Ground</i>	357
WILLIAM BLAKE (1757-1827)	
<i>The Tyger</i>	359
<i>London</i>	361
<i>And Did Those Feet in Ancient Time</i>	362
<i>Piping down the Valleys Wild</i>	363
<i>The Sick Rose</i>	364
<i>The Lamb</i>	365
<i>Ab! Sun-Flower</i>	366
<i>Hear the Voice of the Bard</i>	367
<i>Auguries of Innocence</i>	368
<i>How Sweet I Roam'd from Field to Field</i>	372
<i>The Little Black Boy</i>	373
<i>A Poison Tree</i>	375
<i>The Chimney Sweeper</i>	376
<i>To the Evening Star</i>	378
<i>The Garden of Love</i>	379
<i>The Clod and the Pebble</i>	380
<i>Holy Thursday</i>	381
<i>Mock On, Mock On, Voltaire, Rousseau</i>	382

Table of Contents

ROBERT BURNS (1759-1796)	
<i>A Red, Red Rose</i>	383
<i>To a Mouse on Turning Her Up in Her Nest with the Plough, November, 1785</i>	384
<i>John Anderson, My Jo</i>	386
<i>The Banks o' Doon</i>	387
<i>For A' That and A' That</i>	388
<i>Holy Willie's Prayer</i>	390
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850)	
<i>The World Is Too Much with Us</i>	394
<i>I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud</i>	396
<i>Composed upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802</i>	397
<i>The Solitary Reaper</i>	398
<i>Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood</i>	400
<i>Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey</i>	407
<i>Lucy (comprising:)</i>	
<i>She Dwelt among the Untrodden Ways</i>	412
<i>I Traveled among Unknown Men</i>	412
<i>Strange Fits of Passion Have I Known</i>	413
<i>Three Years She Grew in Sun and Shower</i>	414
<i>A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal</i>	415
<i>It Is a Beauteous Evening</i>	416
<i>London, 1802</i>	417
<i>My Heart Leaps Up</i>	418
<i>Surprised by Joy</i>	419
<i>She Was a Phantom of Delight</i>	420
<i>Resolution and Independence</i>	421
SIR WALTER SCOTT (1771-1832)	
<i>Proud Maisie</i>	426
<i>Breathes There the Man with Soul So Dead</i>	427

Table of Contents

<i>Lochinvar</i>	428
SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772-1834)	
<i>Kubla Khan</i>	430
<i>The Rime of the Ancient Mariner</i>	433
<i>Dejection: An Ode</i>	458
<i>Frost at Midnight</i>	463
ROBERT SOUTHEY (1774-1843)	
<i>The Battle of Blenheim</i>	466
WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR (1775-1864)	
<i>Rose Aylmer</i>	469
<i>Dirce</i>	470
<i>I Strove with None, for None Was Worth My Strife</i>	471
<i>Past Ruined Iliou Helen Lives</i>	472
THOMAS CAMPBELL (1777-1844)	
<i>Hohenlinden</i>	473
CLEMENT CLARKE MOORE (1779-1863)	
<i>A Visit from St. Nicholas</i>	475
LEIGH HUNT (1784-1859)	
<i>Jenny Kissed Me</i>	477
<i>About Ben Adhem</i>	478
GEORGE GORDON NOEL BYRON, 6TH BARON BYRON (1788-1824)	
<i>So We'll Go No More a-Roving</i>	479
<i>She Walks in Beauty</i>	481
<i>The Destruction of Sennacherib</i>	482
<i>When We Two Parted</i>	484
<i>The Ocean</i>	486

Table of Contents

<i>There Was a Sound of Revelry by Night</i>	489
CHARLES WOLFE (1791-1823)	
<i>The Burial of Sir John Moore after Corunna</i>	493
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792-1822)	
<i>Ozymandias</i>	495
<i>Ode to the West Wind</i>	497
<i>To a Skylark</i>	500
<i>Music, When Soft Voices Die</i>	504
<i>To Night</i>	505
<i>England in 1819</i>	507
<i>To _____</i>	508
<i>Adonais</i>	509
JOHN CLARE (1793-1864)	
<i>I Am</i>	528
WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT (1794-1878)	
<i>To a Waterfowl</i>	530
<i>Thanatopsis</i>	532
JOHN KEATS (1795-1821)	
<i>To Autumn</i>	535
<i>La Belle Dame sans Merci</i>	537
<i>La Belle Dame sans Merci (Revised Version)</i>	539
<i>On First Looking into Chapman's Homer</i>	541
<i>Ode to a Nightingale</i>	542
<i>Ode on a Grecian Urn</i>	546
<i>When I Have Fears</i>	548
<i>Ode on Melancholy</i>	549
<i>The Eve of St. Agnes</i>	551
<i>Bright Star</i>	565
<i>Ode to Psyche</i>	566

Table of Contents

THOMAS HOOD (1799-1845)	
<i>I Remember, I Remember</i>	569
THOMAS LOVELL BEDDOES (1803-1849)	
<i>Old Adam, the Carrion Crow</i>	571
RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803-1882)	
<i>Concord Hymn</i>	573
<i>The Snow-Storm</i>	574
<i>The Rhodora</i>	575
<i>Brahma</i>	576
<i>Fable</i>	577
<i>Days</i>	578
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING (1806-1861)	
<i>How Do I Love Thee? Let Me Count the Ways</i>	579
HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW (1807-1882)	
<i>My Lost Youth</i>	580
<i>Paul Revere's Ride</i>	584
<i>Chaucer</i>	589
JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER (1807-1892)	
<i>Barbara Frietchie</i>	590
<i>Snow-Bound; A Winter Idyl</i>	593
OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES (1809-1894)	
<i>The Deacon's Masterpiece; or, The Wonderful "One-Hoss Shay"</i>	615
<i>The Chambered Nautilus</i>	620
<i>Old Ironsides</i>	622
EDGAR ALLAN POE (1809-1849)	
<i>To Helen</i>	623
<i>The Raven</i>	625

Table of Contents

<i>Annabel Lee</i>	631
<i>The City in the Sea</i>	633
<i>The Bells</i>	635
<i>The Haunted Palace</i>	639
ALFRED TENNYSON, 1ST BARON TENNYSON (1809-1892)	
<i>The Splendor Falls</i>	641
<i>Break, Break, Break</i>	643
<i>Crossing the Bar</i>	644
<i>Ulysses</i>	645
<i>The Eagle</i>	648
<i>Tears, Idle Tears</i>	649
<i>Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal</i>	650
<i>The Charge of the Light Brigade</i>	651
<i>Mariana</i>	654
<i>The Lady of Shalott</i>	657
<i>Flower in the Crannied Wall</i>	664
ROBERT BROWNING (1812-1889)	
<i>My Last Duchess</i>	665
<i>Home Thoughts from Abroad</i>	668
<i>Meeting at Night</i>	669
<i>The Year's at the Spring</i>	670
<i>The Bishop Orders His Tomb at St. Praxed's Church</i>	671
<i>Parting at Morning</i>	675
<i>Two in the Campagna</i>	676
EDWARD LEAR (1812-1888)	
<i>The Owl and the Pussy-Cat</i>	679
<i>The Jumblies</i>	681
EMILY BRONTË (1818-1848)	
<i>Remembrance</i>	684

Table of Contents

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH (1819-1861)	
<i>Say Not the Struggle Nought Availeth</i>	686
<i>The Latest Decalogue</i>	687
JULIA WARD HOWE (1819-1910)	
<i>The Battle Hymn of the Republic</i>	688
WALT WHITMAN (1819-1892)	
<i>A Noiseless Patient Spider</i>	690
<i>O Captain! My Captain!</i>	692
<i>When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd</i>	694
<i>I Hear America Singing</i>	704
<i>Cavalry Crossing a Ford</i>	705
MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-1888)	
<i>Dover Beach</i>	706
<i>The Scholar-Gipsy</i>	708
WILLIAM ALLINGHAM (1824-1889)	
<i>The Fairies</i>	717
GEORGE MEREDITH (1828-1909)	
<i>Lucifer in Starlight</i>	719
<i>Thus Piteously Love Closed What He Begat</i>	720
DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI (1828-1882)	
<i>The Blessed Damozel</i>	721
<i>The Woodspurge</i>	727
EMILY DICKINSON (1830-1886)	
<i>"Because I could not stop for Death"</i>	728
<i>"I heard a Fly buzz—when I died"</i>	730
<i>"A narrow Fellow in the Grass"</i>	731
<i>"There's a certain Slant of light"</i>	732
<i>"A Bird came down the Walk"</i>	733

Table of Contents

<i>"The Soul selects her own Society"</i>	734
<i>"I like to see it lap the Miles"</i>	735
<i>"My life closed twice before its close"</i>	736
<i>"Success is counted sweetest"</i>	737
<i>"I taste a liquor never brewed"</i>	738
<i>"After great pain, a formal feeling comes"</i>	739
<i>"I felt a Funeral, in my Brain"</i>	740
<i>"I never saw a Moor"</i>	741
<i>"Much Madness is divinest Sense"</i>	742
 CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI (1830-1894)	
<i>When I Am Dead</i>	743
<i>Up-Hill</i>	744
<i>A Birthday</i>	745
<i>Remember</i>	746
 "LEWIS CARROLL"	
(CHARLES LUTWIDGE DODGSON) (1832-1898)	
<i>Jabberwocky</i>	747
<i>The Walrus and the Carpenter</i>	749
<i>Father William</i>	753
<i>I'll Tell Thee Everything I Can</i>	755
<i>How Doth the Little Crocodile</i>	758
 SIR WILLIAM SCHWENCK GILBERT (1836-1911)	
<i>The Yarn of the Nancy Bell</i>	759
 ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE (1837-1909)	
<i>When the Hounds of Spring Are on Winter's Traces</i>	763
<i>The Garden of Proserpine</i>	766
 THOMAS HARDY (1840-1928)	
<i>The Darkling Thrush</i>	770
<i>The Oxen</i>	772

Table of Contents

<i>In Time of "The Breaking of Nations"</i>	773
<i>Channel Firing</i>	774
<i>Afterwards</i>	776
<i>The Convergence of the Twain</i>	777
<i>The Man He Killed</i>	779
<i>Neutral Tones</i>	780
<i>The Ruined Maid</i>	781
<i>The Voice</i>	783
<i>During Wind and Rain</i>	784
ROBERT BRIDGES (1844-1930)	
<i>London Snow</i>	786
<i>Nightingales</i>	788
GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS (1844-1889)	
<i>Pied Beauty</i>	789
<i>The Windhover</i>	790
<i>God's Grandeur</i>	792
<i>Spring and Fall</i>	793
<i>Felix Randal</i>	794
<i>No Worst, There Is None</i>	795
<i>Thou Art Indeed Just, Lord</i>	796
<i>Spring</i>	797
<i>Heaven-Haven</i>	798
<i>Inversnaid</i>	799
<i>The Habit of Perfection</i>	800
<i>Carrion Comfort</i>	802
EUGENE FIELD (1850-1895)	
<i>Wynken, Blynken, and Nod</i>	803
<i>The Duel</i>	805
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON (1850-1894)	
<i>Requiem</i>	807

Table of Contents

EDWIN MARKHAM (1852-1940)	
<i>The Man with the Hoe</i>	808
OSCAR WILDE (1854-1900)	
<i>The Ballad of Reading Gaol</i>	810
ALFRED EDWARD HOUSMAN (1859-1936)	
<i>Loveliest of Trees</i>	833
<i>To an Athlete Dying Young</i>	834
<i>With Rue My Heart Is Laden</i>	836
<i>When I Was One-and-Twenty</i>	837
<i>Terence, This Is Stupid Stuff</i>	838
<i>Into My Heart an Air That Kills</i>	841
<i>On Wenlock Edge</i>	842
FRANCIS THOMPSON (1859-1907)	
<i>The Hound of Heaven</i>	843
RUDYARD KIPLING (1865-1936)	
<i>Recessional</i>	849
<i>Danny Deever</i>	851
WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS (1865-1939)	
<i>The Second Coming</i>	853
<i>Sailing to Byzantium</i>	855
<i>Leda and the Swan</i>	857
<i>The Lake Isle of Innisfree</i>	858
<i>When You Are Old</i>	859
<i>Among School Children</i>	860
<i>An Irish Airman Foresees His Death</i>	863
<i>Easter, 1916</i>	864
<i>The Wild Swans at Coole</i>	867
<i>The Circus Animals' Desertion</i>	869
<i>A Prayer for My Daughter</i>	871
<i>Lapis Lazuli</i>	874

Table of Contents

<i>After Apple-Picking</i>	903
<i>Acquainted with the Night</i>	905
<i>Provide, Provide</i>	906
<i>The Gift Outright</i>	907
<i>Directive</i>	908
<i>Design</i>	910
JOHN MASEFIELD (1878-1967)	
<i>Cargoes</i>	911
CARL SANDBURG (1878-1967)	
<i>Chicago</i>	912
<i>Fog</i>	914
<i>Cool Tombs</i>	915
<i>Grass</i>	916
EDWARD THOMAS (1878-1917)	
<i>The Owl</i>	917
VACHEL LINDSAY (1879-1931)	
<i>Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight</i>	918
WALLACE STEVENS (1879-1955)	
<i>Sunday Morning</i>	920
<i>Anecdote of the Jar</i>	925
<i>The Emperor of Ice-Cream</i>	926
<i>The Idea of Order at Key West</i>	927
<i>Peter Quince at the Clavier</i>	929
<i>Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird</i>	932
WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS (1883-1963)	
<i>The Red Wheelbarrow</i>	935
<i>The Dance</i>	936
<i>Spring and All</i>	937
<i>The Yachts</i>	939

Table of Contents

DAVID HERBERT LAWRENCE (1885-1930)	
<i>Piano</i>	941
<i>Snake</i>	942
<i>Bavarian Gentians</i>	946
EZRA POUND (1885-1972)	
<i>The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter</i>	948
<i>In a Station of the Metro</i>	950
RUPERT BROOKE (1887-1915)	
<i>The Soldier</i>	951
ROBINSON JEFFERS (1887-1962)	
<i>Hurt Hawks</i>	952
<i>Shine, Perishing Republic</i>	954
MARIANNE MOORE (1887-1972)	
<i>Poetry</i>	955
<i>A Grave</i>	957
DAME EDITH SITWELL (1887-1964)	
<i>Still Falls the Rain</i>	959
THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT (1888-1965)	
<i>The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock</i>	961
<i>Journey of the Magi</i>	966
<i>The Waste Land</i>	968
<i>Sweeney among the Nightingales</i>	982
<i>Gerontion</i>	984
<i>Little Gidding</i>	987
JOHN CROWE RANSOM (1888-1974)	
<i>Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter</i>	995
<i>Piazza Piece</i>	997

Table of Contents

CLAUDE MCKAY (1890-1948)	
<i>If We Must Die</i>	998
ISAAC ROSENBERG (1890-1918)	
<i>Break of Day in the Trenches</i>	999
ARCHIBALD MACLEISH (1892-1982)	
<i>You, Andrew Marvell</i>	1001
<i>Ars Poetica</i>	1003
<i>The End of the World</i>	1005
WILFRED OWEN (1893-1918)	
<i>Anthem for Doomed Youth</i>	1006
<i>Dulce et Decorum Est</i>	1007
<i>Strange Meeting</i>	1008
<i>Greater Love</i>	1010
EDWARD ESTLIN CUMMINGS (1894-1962)	
<i>anyone lived in a pretty how town</i>	1011
<i>"next to of course god america i"</i>	1013
HART CRANE (1899-1932)	
<i>To Brooklyn Bridge</i>	1014
ALLEN TATE (1899-1979)	
<i>Ode to the Confederate Dead</i>	1017
LANGSTON HUGHES (1902-1967)	
<i>The Negro Speaks of Rivers</i>	1021
STEVIE SMITH (1902-1971)	
<i>Not Waving But Drowning</i>	1022
RICHARD EBERHART (b. 1904)	
<i>The Fury of Aerial Bombardment</i>	1023

Table of Contents

<i>The Groundhog</i>	1024
WYSTAN HUGH AUDEN (1907-1973)	
<i>Musée des Beaux Arts</i>	1026
<i>In Memory of W. B. Yeats</i>	1028
<i>Lullaby</i>	1031
LOUIS MACNEICE (1907-1963)	
<i>Bagpipe Music</i>	1033
THEODORE ROETHKE (1908-1963)	
<i>My Papa's Waltz</i>	1035
<i>I Knew a Woman</i>	1036
<i>The Waking</i>	1038
<i>Elegy for Jane</i>	1039
<i>In a Dark Time</i>	1040
SIR STEPHEN SPENDER (b. 1909)	
<i>I Think Continually of Those Who Were Truly Great</i>	1041
ELIZABETH BISHOP (1911-1979)	
<i>The Fish</i>	1043
ROBERT HAYDEN (1913-1980)	
<i>Those Winter Sundays</i>	1046
RANDALL JARRELL (1914-1965)	
<i>The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner</i>	1047
HENRY REED (1914-1986)	
<i>Naming of Parts</i>	1048
DYLAN THOMAS (1914-1953)	
<i>Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night</i>	1050

Table of Contents

<i>Fern Hill</i>	1052
<i>A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London</i>	1054
<i>The Force That through the Green Fuse Drives the Flower</i>	1056
GWENDOLYN BROOKS (b. 1917)	
<i>We Real Cool</i>	1057
ROBERT LOWELL (1917-1977)	
<i>Skunk Hour</i>	1058
<i>For the Union Dead</i>	1061
<i>Mr. Edwards and the Spider</i>	1064
RICHARD WILBUR (b. 1921)	
<i>Love Calls Us to the Things of This World</i>	1066
PHILIP LARKIN (1922-1985)	
<i>Church Going</i>	1068
ALLEN GINSBERG (b. 1926)	
<i>A Supermarket in California</i>	1071
SYLVIA PLATH (1932-1963)	
<i>Daddy</i>	1073
The Poems in Order of Popularity	1077
Acknowledgments	1093
Index of Poets	1099
Index of Titles and First Lines	1105

THE
TOP
500
POEMS

THIS IS *IT!*

I am dedicating my thoughts in this book to my three-year-old daughter Caroline, because I have had her constantly in mind (and sometimes in lap) as I wrote about the poems collected here. Already, on a daily basis, she hears poetry, and before long she will be able to read it for herself. What general book of poetry should she, or anyone, start with? Well, this collection of the 500 poems that (according to *The Columbia Granger's[®] Index to Poetry*) have been anthologized most often impresses me as exactly the sort of book with which I would want to welcome her to the world of poetry in English. As a poet, teacher, editor, and father, I am satisfied that these 500 poems, with a bit of commentary, will serve as a splendid way for somebody to become acquainted with the best that has been written in the shorter poetic forms for about 750 years. As I have said to myself repeatedly, this is *it!*

This is the story of poetry in English, starting in the Middle Ages in England and ending in the English-speaking world of today. It starts with poems of a simplicity of form and directness of emotion that appeal instantly to children and adults alike. But mature artistry is on display from the beginning, as is that necessary preoccupation of maturity—time. Growing children are the most vivid reminders of our own aging, and this book demonstrates, from the beginning, that English poets have been obsessed with the passage of time. Much poetry seems to be aware of its situation in time and of its relation to the metronome, the clock, and the calendar. Among the earliest poems in this book there is a sense of seasons being born:

Sumer is icumen in

When April with its sweet showers

The season or month is there to be felt; the day is there to be seized. Poetry keeps telling us what happens in time. Poems beginning

"When" are much more numerous than those beginning "Where" or "If." As the meter is running, the recurrent message tapped out by the passing of measured time is mortality. (This undercurrent may account for the melancholy and fright that turn up even in lullabies and nursery rhymes, which suggest that life is an affair of breaking boughs, falling cradles, bridges falling down, falling down, falling down.)

But generally it has occurred to me, as I thought about these 500 poems, that English-speaking people have produced one of the greatest bodies of literature the world has ever seen. The drama has been a scene of brilliance since 1590; the novel is about a century younger. In poetry, however, the English genius goes right back into the Middle Ages. Great poetry has been written in the English language for at least 600 years. Dull periods have come along from time to time, true, but in most periods since Chaucer, who died in 1400, the English language has served somebody somewhere as the instrument of breathtaking poetry: epic, dramatic, lyric, satiric, meditative, nonsensical, as well as every conceivable combination and permutation.

The greatness of English poetry in a large way reflects on the peoples who have spoken English, their culture, weather, humor, even their "character," whatever that term may suggest. They have liked songs and stories, and they have believed in talk, all the way from tavern conversation to parliamentary debate.

And they have had the English language itself. Modern English, the language in which my daughter is even now gaining fluency, incorporates Indo-European elements from northwestern and southwestern Europe—from Anglo-Saxon (Germanic) and French (Italic). Because of its history, English has become, in respect of vocabulary and syntax, practically a double language, commonly offering speakers a number of different ways of saying something. For the sake of the arts of poetry, several features of the peculiarly English language-mixture have been inexhaustibly useful. The large vocabulary furnishes a broad range of possibilities with much opportunity for nuances and ironies of meaning along with complex harmonies and textures. Some poets have favored the Germanic extreme of substantial syllables that stay close to the earth and move rather slowly, as in Hopkins's "Inversnaid":

This darksome burn, horseback brown,
His rollrock highroad roaring down,
In coop and in comb the fleece of his foam
Flutes and low to the lake falls home.

Others enjoy the interplay of Germanic and Italic colorations, as in Shakespeare's Sonnet CXVI:

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments

The physical condition of the language that was in place by about 1250 invited exploitation by poets of many sorts. Indo-European languages share certain basic features and change according to certain common patterns; by 1250 the general changes in English had a permanent effect on what poets could do. One tremendous change, which began many centuries ago and is still going on, has to do with the typical word-making and word-changing mechanism of a language.

Consider the Latin word *video*: it is made up from a stem (*vid-*, "see") plus a suffix (*-eo*) meaning something like "first-person singular present indicative": the English translation, "I see," must state the pronoun (1) as a separate word that (2) comes before the verb. Likewise, the *vidi* in Julius Caesar's famous claim *Veni, vidi, vici* requires two or three separate English words for an adequate translation: "I saw" or "I have seen." The drift—from single words with inflections on the right side, to collections of single words arranged on the left—has affected what we do with nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. The process had led to a language with many more monosyllables than Latin had and with many more polysyllabic words that can be stressed on the final syllables. Latin had no such words.

This is not the place to go into the details of such evolutionary developments. Indeed, there are still controversies about the whole affair. It seems, even so, that, about a thousand years ago, Indo-European languages were reaching a state in which three devices were newly available to verse-markers: (1) there were syllables that could be distinguished and measured by *quality* or accent, rather than by *quantity* or duration (as had been the uniform custom in the

PRAISE FOR

The Top 500 Poems

"The Top 500 Poems is intriguing in concept and management, and most of us will want to own it. And for this we are grateful."

—Gwendolyn Brooks, poet

"The merriest poetry anthology of the past decade. . . . It's everything from 'Sumer is icumen in' to Sylvia Plath's 'Daddy' with terse, plain, and rather wonderful commentary by Harmon."—*Buffalo News*

"A revealing snapshot of one aspect of Western civilization, even including a list of the poems in order of popularity."
—*Globe and Mail*

"If your library can buy only one volume of poetry, let this be it."—*Booklist*

"It is rare indeed to come across a book in which wisdom and love come together as powerfully as they do for William Harmon."—John Frederick Nims, coauthor of *Western Wind: An Introduction to Poetry*

"Hail, Columbia! Your *Top 500 Poems* is like a huge gathering of one's oldest and dearest friends, agreeably hosted by Harmon, who wittily sees that everyone has a good time. It is hard to imagine a more delightful party."—Joel Conarroe, author of *Eight American Poets: An Anthology*

ISBN: 978-0-231-08028-6
9 780231 080286