

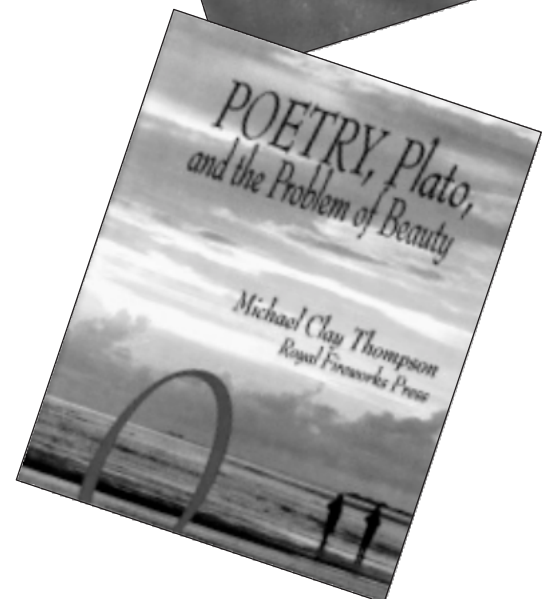
Michael Clay Thompson's
Poetry Program

A Companion Anthology

Level Two
The Secondary Series



Royal Fireworks Press
First Avenue, PO Box 399
Unionville, NY 10988



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Royal Fireworks Press
First Avenue, PO Box 399
Unionville, NY 10988-0399
(845) 726-4444
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email: mail@rfwp.com
website: rfwp.com

ISBN: 978-0-89824-788-6

Printed and bound in the United States of America using
vegetable-based inks on acid-free recycled paper and
environmentally friendly cover coatings by the Royal Fireworks
Printing Co. of Unionville, New York.

Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	5
2.	Arnold	Dover Beach	7
3.	Blake	A Poison Tree	8
4.		Nurse's Song	10
5.		Reeds of Innocence	11
6.		Silent, Silent Night	12
7.		The Divine Image	12
8.		The Tiger	13
9.	Bradstreet	Contemplations	14
10.	Bronte	The Old Stoic	15
11.	Brooke	The Soldier	16
12.	Browning, E.	How Do I Love Thee?	17
13.	Browning, R.	Memorabilia	19
14.		My Last Duchess	20
15.		Pippa's Song	21
16.	Bryant	To a Waterfowl	22
17.	Burns	A Red, Red Rose	22
18.		Afton Water	25
19.		A Man's a Man for 'A That	25
20.		Jon Anderson, My Jo	26
21.		My Heart's in the Highlands	26
22.	Byron	Ballad	26
23.		There Is a Pleasure in the Pathless Woods	27
24.		She Walks in Beauty	28
25.		So, We'll Go No More A-Roving	28
26.		The Dark, Blue Sea	28
27.		The Destruction of Sennacherib	29
28.		When a Man Hath No Freedom to Fight for at Home	29
29.	Carroll	The Walrus and the Carpenter	30
30.	Chesterton	A Certain Evening	30
31.	Coleridge	Kubla Khan	30
32.		Metrical Feet—A Lesson for a Boy	31
33.		The Rime of the Ancient Mariner	31
34.	Cowper	The Castaway	32
35.	Dickinson	A Narrow Fellow in the Grass	33
36.		An Everywhere of Silver	33
37.		Arcturus Is His Other Name	34
38.		Because I Could Not Stop for Death	35
39.		He Ate and Drank the Precious Words	39
40.		Hope Is the Thing with Feathers	40

41.		I Died for Beauty, but Was Scarce	42
42.		I Like a Look of Agony.	44
43.		I Many Times Thought Peace Had Come.	44
44.		I Never Told the Buried Gold	44
44.		I Took My Power in My Hand	45
45.		It Dropped So Low in My Regard	45
46.		It Sifts from Leaden Sieves.	46
47.		Much Madness Is Divinest Sense	46
48.		Nature, the Gentlest Mother	47
49.		Tell All the Truth but Tell It Slant.	48
50.		The First Day's Night Had Come	48
51.		The Moon Is Distant from the Sea	49
52.		The Rat Is the Concisest Tenant	49
53.		The Wind Began to Rock the Grass	50
54.		There Is No Frigate Like a Book	51
55.		This Is the Land the Sunset Washes	51
56.		The Mountain Sat Upon the Plain.	52
57.		'Twas Later When the Summer Went	52
58.		We Never Know How High We Are.	54
59.		There's a Certain Slant of Light	57
60.		The Past Is Such a Curious Creature.	57
61.	Donne	A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning	58
62.		Death, Be Not Proud.	58
63.	Eliot	The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock	59
64.	Emerson	Concord Hymn	60
65.	Frost	The Road Not Taken	60
66.	Gray	Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard	61
67.	Hardy	Channel Firing	61
68.		I Look into My Glass	62
69.		The Darkling Thrush.	62
70.	Herbert	Paradise.	64
71.	Herrick	To Daffodils	65
72.	Hodgson	Eve	67
73.	Hopkins	Heaven-Haven.	70
74.		Inversnaid	70
75.		Spring and Fall	71
76.	Housman	When I Was One-and-Twenty.	72
77.	Hunt	The Nile	73
78.	Jeffers	The Eye.	74
79.	Jonson	Though I Am Young and Cannot Tell.	74
80.	Keats	Bright Star! Would I Were Steadfast as Thou Art.	75
81.		Ode on a Grecian Urn	76
82.		On First Looking into Chapman's Homer	77
83.		On the Grasshopper and the Cricket.	80
84.		The Gothic Looks Solemn	81
85.		When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be.	81
86.	Kipling	Mandalay.	82

87.	Lanier	The Marshes of Glynn	98
88.	Lear	Cold Are the Crabs	98
89.	Longfellow	Chaucer	98
90.		Snow-Flakes	98
91.	Melville	Misgivings.	98
92.	Millay	God's World	99
93.	Milton	When I Consider How My Light Is Spent	99
94.	Owen	Strange Meeting	99
95.	Poe	To Helen	88
96.	Pope	An Essay on Criticism	99
97.		Ode on Solitude.	88
98.	Pound	The River-Merchants Wife: A Letter	99
99.	Rossetti	A Birthday.	99
100.	Scott	Alice Brand.	88
101.	Shakespeare	Sonnet 19	88
102.		Sonnet 29	99
103.		Sonnet 30	99
104.		Sonnet 55	99
105.		Sonnet 71	99
106.		Sonnet 73	99
107.		Sonnet 74	88
108.		Sonnet 116.	88
109.	Shelley	The Cloud	88
110.		Hymn to Intellectual Beauty	88
111.		Ozymandias.	77
112.		Ode to the West Wind	88
113.		To a Skylark	77
114.		To the Moon	88
115.	Spenser	Of This World's Theatre in Which We Stay	88
116.		Sonnet 75	88
117.	Swinburne	An Interlude	88
118.		Sestina.	88
119.	Tennyson	Break, Break, Break	66
120.		The Charge of the Light Brigade	88
121.		Crossing the Bar	44
122.		Flower in the Crannied Wall.	77
123.		Ulysses	77
124.	Thomas	Ballad of the Long-Legged Bait	44
125.		Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night	44
126.		This Side of the Truth	44
127.	Thompson	The Hound of Heaven.	84
128.	Whitman	A Noiseless Patient Spider	84
129.		O Captain! My Captain!	88
130.		Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking	84
131.		When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd.	88
132.	Wordsworth	Composed upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802	99
133.		My Heart Leaps Up.	99

134.		Daffodils	88
135.		Resolution and Independence	99
136.		Written in London, 1802	99
137.	Wyatt	I Find No Peace	88
138.		They Flee from Me	99
139.	Yeats	Adam's Curse	99
140.		Easter 1916	99
141.		He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven	99
142.		No Second Troy	99
143.		Sailing to Byzantium	99
144.		The Ballad of Father Gilligan	99
145.		The Two Trees	99
146.		The Old Men Admiring Themselves in the Water	09
147.		To a Child Dancing in the Wind	99
148.		To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Nothing	99
149.		Under Ben Bulbin	99
150.		The Tower	99
151.		The Wild Swans at Coole	99

The Poems of the Anthology, Volume Two Separated by Poetry Textbook

If you are using *Poetry and Humanity*:

The poems that appear in *Poetry and Humanity* and that are included in this anthology are, in order of appearance in the text:

Hardy	Darkling Thrush
Dickinson	He Ate and Drank the Precious Words
Yeats	Easter 1916
Yeats	Under Ben Bulbin
Shelley	To a Skylark
Browning	Memorabilia
Blake	On Another's Sorrow
Longfellow	Snow-Flakes
Swinburne	An Interlude
Hardy	Channel Firing
Yeats	To a Child Dancing in the Wind
Lear	Cold Are the Crabs
Dickinson	The Moon Is Distant from the Sea
Carroll	The Walrus and the Carpenter
Tennyson	Crossing the Bar
Tennyson	The Charge of the Light Brigade
Burns	Afton Water
Blake	The Tiger
Shakespeare	Sonnet 55
Pope	An Essay on Criticism
Shelley	Ode to the West Wind
Dickinson	I Many Times Thought Peace Had Come
Dickinson	'Twas Later When the Summer Went
Coleridge	The Rime of the Ancient Mariner
Blake	Reeds of Innocence
Yeats	He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven
Cowper	The Castaway Wyatt
	They Flee from Me
Burns	For A' That and A' That
Shakespeare	Sonnet 76
Wordsworth	Written in London, Sept 1802
Yeats	To a Friend Whose Work
Byron	When a Man Hath No Freedom to Fight for at Home
Dickinson	The Past is Such a Curious Creature
Dickinson	Nature, the Gentlest Mother
Rossetti	My Heart Is like a Singing Bird

Burns	A Red, Red Rose
Dickinson	Hope is the Thing with Feathers
Byron	The Sea
Wordsworth	Daffodils
Arnold	Dover Beach
Yeats	No Second Troy
Shelley	To the Moon
Chesterton	A Certain Evening
Hunt	The Nile
Wordsworth	My Heart Leaps Up
Dickinson	This Is the Land the Sunset Washes
Yeats	Adam's Curse

If you are using *Poetry, Plato, and the Problem of Beauty*:

The poems that appear in *Poetry, Plato, and the Problem of Beauty* and that are included in this anthology are, in order of appearance in the text:

Gray	Elegy Written in a Country
Dickinson	An everywhere of silver
Keats	The Gothic Looks Solemn
Byron	She walks in beauty
Shelley	The Cloud
Dickinson	It sifts from leaden sieves
Burns	My Heart's in the Highlands
Yeats	The Two Trees
Lanier	The Marches of Glynn
Thompson	The Hound of Heaven
Melville	Misgivings
Owen	Strange Meeting
Dickinson	It Dropped So Low in My Regard
Blake	The Tiger
Pope	Ode on Solitude
Keats	When I Have Fears
Hodgson	Eve
Blake	Nurse's Song
Dickinson	We Never Know How High We Are
Blake	A Poison Tree
Keats	Ode on a Grecian Urn
Shakespeare	Sonnet 116
Tennyson	Break, Break, Break
Hopkins	Heaven-Haven
Dickinson	I Died for Beauty
Jonson	Though I am Young
Shakespeare	Sonnet 30

Milton	When I Consider How My Light
Spenser	Sonnet 75
Browning	How Do I Love Thee?
Wordsworth	Composed upon Westminster Bridge, Sept. 3, 1802
Byron	There Is a Pleasure in the Pathless Woods
Dickinson	The Rat is the Concisest Tenant
Yeats	The Tower
Yeats	The Old Men Admiring Themselves in the Water
Jeffers	The Eye
Keats	On First Looking into Chapman's Homer
Dickinson	The Wind Begun to Rock the Grass
Dickinson	The Mountain Sat upon the Plain
Keats	Bright Star
Millay	God's World
Shelley	Hymn to Intellectual Beauty
Eliot	The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock
Frost	The Road Not Taken
Pound	The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter
Shakespeare	Sonnet 73
Yeats	Adam's Curse

If you are using *Poetry, Plato, and the Problem of Truth*:

The poems that appear in *Poetry, Plato, and the Problem of Truth* and that are included in this anthology are, in order of appearance in the text:

Shelley	Ozymandias
Yeats	Ben Bulbin
Emerson	Concord Hymn
Whitman	A noiseless patient spider
Thomas	Ballad of the long legged bait
Dickinson	Tell all the truth but tell it slant
Yeats	The wild swans at coole
Owen	Strange Meeting
Dickinson	Because I Could Not Stop for Death
Tennyson	Flower in the Crannied Wall
Herbert	Paradise
Herrick	To Daffodils
Blake	Silent, Silent Night
Thomas	This Side of the Truth
Dickinson	Much Madness Is Divinest Sense
Hopkins	Inversnaid
Whitman	O Captain
Dickinson	I Never Told the Buried Gold

Scott	Alice Brand
Housman	When I Was One-and-Twenty
Burns	Jon Anderson, My Jo
Dickinson	There's a Certain Slant of Light
Hopkins	Spring and Fall
Blake	A Poison Tree
Browning	Pippa's Song
Coleridge	Kubla Khan
Coleridge	Metrical Feet—Lessons for a Boy
Wordsworth	I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud
Byron	The Destruction of Sennacherib
Whitman	Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking
Whitman	When Lilacs Last in the Door-yard Bloom'd
Byron	So We'll Go No More A-Roving
Keats	On the Grasshopper and the Cricket
Bronte	The Old Stoic
Browning	My Last Duchess
Dickinson	I Many Times Thought Peace Had Come
Shakespeare	Sonnet 116
Shakespeare	Sonnet 29
Shakespeare	Sonnet 71
Wyatt	I Find No Peace
Spenser	Of This World's Theatre in Which We Stay
Wordsworth	Resolution and Independence
Bradstreet	Contemplations
Thomas	Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night
Swinburne	Sestina
Shelley	Ode to the West Wind
Yeats	Sailing to Byzantium
Blake	The Divine Image
Kipling	Mandalay
Yeats	The Ballad of Father Gilligan
Housman	When I Was One-and-Twenty
Byron	Ballad
Hardy	I Look into My Glass
Dickinson	I Pull a Flower from the Woods
Dickinson	I Like a Look of Agony
Dickinson	Because I Could Not Stop for Death
Brooke	The Soldier
Dickinson	There Is No Frigate Like a Book
Poe	To Helen
Burns	A Red, Red Rose
Donne	A Valediction, Forbidding Mourning
Dickinson	The First Day's Night Had Come
Shakespeare	Sonnet 19

Tennyson	Ulysses
Donne	Death, Be Not Proud
Dickinson	I Took My Power in My Hand
Bryant	To a Waterfowl
Dickinson	A Narrow Fellow in the Grass
Longfellow	Chaucer

Introduction

Michael Clay Thompson

GENERAL THOUGHTS

An Instructor's Companion Anthology

This two-volume anthology is a response to parents and teachers who are using my poetry texts and who have asked for a convenient collection of complete poems in cases where my textbooks contain only a stanza or line. Accordingly, there are no partial poems or selections in this anthology; here you will find, in their entirety, poems featured in my texts—among them, many of the best poems ever written.

Volume One of the anthology provides the poems for the first three texts in the elementary tier of my poetry program: *The Music of the Hemispheres*, *Building Poems*, and *A World of Poetry*. The second volume of the anthology provides the poems for the upper tier: *Poetry and Humanity*; *Poetry, Plato, and the Problem of Beauty*; and *Poetry, Plato, and the Problem of Truth*. Some poems appear in both anthologies.

This anthology is not a student text to read from front to back. The organizational plan of the book is not pedagogical. The pedagogy is in the textbooks. This is an instructor's reference book to be used as a companion with the textbooks. Some of the poems will make superb readings for students, and others will be better used for the instructor's information and reserved for the students' future. I have attempted not to make that decision for you, but to do, in the simplest way, what you asked: to provide complete poems.

Combined and Alphabetized by Poet

Each volume of the anthology will be easy for you to use, regardless of which of my poetry texts you are reading. The poems mentioned in the three textbooks are combined and alphabetized by poet's name, so if you want to see a poem by Shelley, go to *s*. I should qualify this statement by saying that although the poets are alphabetized, the poems themselves are only almost alphabetized; I did disrupt alphabetical sequence a few times in order to make best use of page space.

Combining the poems of three textbooks into a single alphabetized list was unavoidable for this anthology. It was impossible to divide the book into three sections with each book's poems in its own section because many poems appear in all three books, so I would have had to print the entire poem, and then print it again thirty pages later, and again later.

The Same Poems Again? Absolutely.

One might wonder if using the same poems in more than one textbook is a flaw, a waste of textbook space. On the contrary, it is an instructional strategy. Poems are not like calendar events that expire upon arrival; poems are like songs, purchased for life. The last thing we want to do is to touch on a great poem once and never revive it again. We want the poets and the poems to reappear, as a reflection of their importance. We want to examine a great poem in one context after another. The medium is the message, and repetition means significance. Yeats is not a minor figure who wrote little-known poems; literate people return to Yeats throughout their lives. We want students to be led back to Yeats, to Dickinson, to Shelley, to Keats, to Shakespeare's sonnets, each time seeing something else, something deeper, each time gaining a greater awareness of the importance of the poet. We want students to bring their new eyes to the poems they first encountered when they began to think about poetry. We want students to develop an increasing enthusiasm as they come again to a poem they know.

Not Every Poem Is Included

For several reasons, I have omitted some works mentioned in the poetry texts. Some of them, such as Shakespeare's plays, were book-length. If a complete poem was already in the textbook, I sometimes did not include it again here—though sometimes I did because the poem was too good to miss. In some cases there were modern copyright protections that had to be honored. Sometimes a long poem did not sufficiently accord with the quick focus of the instructional moment. I did not include the demonstration poems that I myself wrote for the books; they are entire in the books, and I never intended them as anything but illustrations of technique. There were no inadvertent omissions; if a poem is not here, I either could not include it or chose not to include it.

There are also no tacit pedagogical strategies hidden in the list of poems that appear. My goal was simple; readers asked for the complete poems, so here are as many as possible. You will sometimes see why I did not include the entire poem in the original textbook; usually, I was simply focusing on a specific technique and did not need a twenty-page quote to show it. Sometimes there were sections of a poem that seemed too mature for inclusion in the student textbook, and I gently confined our attention to appropriate lines. In this anthology I play it straight: here are the complete poems. It is appropriate to emphasize again, therefore, that this anthology is not a student textbook. It is an instructor's reference book that can be shared with students as deemed appropriate. It is not designed to be read sequentially from cover to cover. What it will let you do is find almost any poem in the poetry textbooks, read the whole poem, and decide whether or not you want to assign a student to read it.

Long Poems, Archaic English, and Strange Dialects, O My!

One of the best features of the poems in this anthology is that some of these poems are old—very old. I have not modernized—a vile word, a detestable word—any sentence; dialect is something to savor, not to avoid. Educational culture today favors short selections of easy language written in the last fifty years. It is all the more important, therefore, for us to give students experience with long readings from earlier centuries. We do not want students to be shut in recent decades; we want them to be free to read back

through the centuries, with excitement and comprehension. Let us journey to the center of the language, with our faces fast to the portholes. Furthermore, reading extended poetry or prose written before 1900 is one of the best ways to develop a powerful vocabulary. In contrast to the timid and blank strategy of assigning readings that students “can relate to,” we here aggressively launch the students back to distant times and distant lands. To read Robert Burns’s defiant “A Man’s a Man for ‘A That” is to know why. You cannot get an education from a school program confined to short, modern readings. Almost all great works are long, and most of them were not written in the 20th or 21st centuries.

But Are Not Some of These Works Too Hard for Students?

I sometimes hear complaints that a work is hard for students to read. Good. That is what we want. That is what strong learning feels like. Our goal is not that students will learn a little bit. Assignments that are not hard are educationally weak. How much do students learn from works that are easy for them to read and that have characters and plots that they can already “relate to”? No, we want to immerse students in language that they have not yet mastered and in ideas that they do not yet understand. We do not want to bring education to the student; we want students to do what it takes to acquire a real education. I am not concerned about whether a one-hour assignment will make students happy, particularly if what they are happy about is that they did not have to work. I am concerned about the long-term happiness that being truly educated provides. I am concerned about the happiness students will feel after doing great work. As I have said before, some subjects do not unlock from the front; it is only after you have learned, after you have read and thought and talked, that you realize how extraordinary some famous work is and how lucky you are to have read it. It is our opportunity as educators to guide students in the early moments, to communicate with them about why subjects are important.

The Look of the Book

In presenting these poems I have attempted to respect the experience of the reader, rather than the economies of publishing. This means that poems are not crowded together on a page to save paper. When possible, a poem is alone on a page, framed in thoughtful white space, to allow the poem to be by itself. I have also attempted to respect the visual integrity of the works; I have tried not to break a one-page poem, putting half of it on one page and the rest of it on the next page. I have even tried not to break stanzas between pages, but to keep quatrains and other stanzas visually intact. I am fortunate to have a child-focused publisher who will tolerate and even welcome such insurrections.

I have been shocked at how difficult it is to create an anthology, so I hope that you will enjoy this book and that it will make your use of the poetry textbooks an even better experience.

THOUGHTS ABOUT VOLUME TWO

Poetry and Humanity

Among the poems in *Poetry and Humanity* are poems that have stayed with me for decades, poems that intensify with time. We see William Butler Yeats's "Easter, 1916" that leaves the words "changed utterly, a terrible beauty is born" ringing in one's mind. In Yeats's final stanza he incorporates the Irish martyrs' names into the poem, never to be forgotten;

And what if excess of love
Bewildered them till they died?
I write it out in a verse—
MacDonagh and MacBride
And Connolly and Pearse
Now and in time to be,
Wherever green is worn,
Are changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

As you would expect from a book entitled *Poetry and Humanity*, this intense identification with the lives of others—the universality of human nature—is a theme that unites the poems of the book. Yeats himself is represented several times by such themes. In "To a Child, Dancing in the Wind," Yeats expresses those experiences that are unknown to the young who have not yet experienced tragedy:

Being young you have not known
The fool's triumph, nor yet
Love lost as soon as won,
Nor the best labourer dead
And all the sheaves to bind.
What need have you to dread
The monstrous crying of wind?

In "To a Friend Whose Work Has Come to Nothing," Yeats commiserates with a friend who is experiencing one of life's hardest moments:

Now all the truth is out, Be
secret and take defeat
From any brazen throat,
For how can you compete,
Being honour bred, with one
Who, were it proved he lies,
Were neither shamed in his own
Nor in his neighbours' eyes?

In “On Another’s Sorrow,” William Blake asks, “Can I see another’s woe, / And not be in sorrow too?” In “Channel Firing” Thomas Hardy imagines the roar of the British navy’s cannons waking the dead in their coffins, the great guns’ thunder rolling over the island in the darkness, and God himself warning about their “threatening.” Alfred, Lord Tennyson, also captures the tragedy of war in “The Charge of the Light Brigade,” a poem about the British light cavalry charging entrenched Russian cannons in the Crimean War; the poem expresses the cavalry’s heroism but also the unspeakable loss of life that they suffered. George Gordon, Lord Byron, envisions fighting for freedom, wherever the cause may be, and expresses it in rushing anapests:

When a man hath no freedom to fight for at home,
Let him combat for that of his neighbors;
Let him think of the glories of Greece and of Rome,
And get knocked on the head for his labors.

Byron was true to his word. He died of a fever at the age of thirty-six, in Missolonghi in Greece, fighting for Greek independence.

The poets in *Poetry and Humanity* also explore the better sides of life. In Robert Burns’s immortal apostrophe to a murmuring river, asking it to flow quietly so as not to wake his beloved, we find an expression of tenderness rarely matched, even in great poetry:

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, I’ll sing thee a song in thy praise;
My Mary’s asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

Christina Rossetti provided one of love’s most vivid and moving similes:

My heart is like a singing bird
Whose nest is in a watered shoot;

One could go on indefinitely, as in a great art museum, looking at the poems in the *Poetry and Humanity* collection, but if I had to live with just one poem for a year and wanted a masterpiece of both art and meaning, I might choose Robert Burns’s “A Man’s a Man for ‘A That.” There is something about Burns’s intensity, about the human truth that roars through the lines:

What though on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hoddin grey, an’ a’ that?
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
A man’s a man for a’ that.
For a’ that, an’ a’ that,
Their tinsel show, an’ a’ that,
The honest man, tho’ e’er sae poor,
is king o’ men for a’ that.

“So what?” Burns is asking. So what if we dine on homely food, wear rough clothing, and all that? A man is a man, for all that. Burns’s final stanza has the spirit of an anthem:

Then let us pray that come it may,
(As come it will for a’ that,)
That Sense and Worth, o’er a’ the earth,
Shall bear the gree, an’ a’ that.
For a’ that, an’ a’ that,
That man to man, the world o’er,
Shall brithers be for a’ that.

To *bear the gree* is to win first place, my brither. What a voice. This poem, which is steeped in defiant Scottish dialect, almost singlehandedly stirs one to understand and commit oneself to human equality. Burns was writing in 1795 and in this poem was carrying the torch lit by Thomas Jefferson. If I were ordered to memorize five major poems, this would be one.

The top two texts in the upper tier of the poetry program use the word *problem* in their titles. In these titles *problem* refers not to a bad situation but to an intellectual problem, like a problem in mathematics. The context of these problems is Socratic perplexity, the realization that life’s obscurities are not easy to solve, that certain knowledge is difficult to acquire, and that as much as we care about both beauty and truth, we must admit that we do not know, finally, what beauty or truth is. As Goethe put it, “Doubt increases with knowledge.”

Poetry, Plato, and the Problem of Beauty

As the title of the book indicates, *Poetry, Plato, and the Problem of Beauty* has a different focus from *Poetry and Humanity*. This book explores, in a philosophical and Socratic way, the concept of beauty as considered by poets. We see many of the same poets—the usual suspects—and even a few of the same poems, such as Blake’s “The Tiger,” or Yeats’s “Adam’s Curse,” but the feel and purpose of the book are different.

Sometimes the poet actually uses the word *beauty*. Byron, writing about a woman with a “heart whose love is innocent,” tells us that:

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that’s best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes.

Byron would rhyme *night* and *bright* again in “So We’ll Go No More A-Roving”; the bright spot in the quatrain is the beautifully alliterated *cloudless climes*. Notice that all four lines are united by assonance and that the pairs of words make sense together: *night skies, bright eyes*.

In “The Old Men Admiring Themselves by the Waters,” Yeats reflects on the temporal nature of beauty:

I heard the old, old men say,
“Everything alters,
And one by one we drop away.”
They had hands like claws, and their knees
Were twisted like the old thorn-trees
By the waters.
I heard the old, old men say,
“All that’s beautiful drifts away
Like the waters.”

The *locus classicus* for the poetry of beauty is surely Keats’s “Ode on a Grecian Urn.” Keats surveys the figures living in immortality on the sides of a Grecian urn and comes to a recognition about the reason for our perception of beauty:

When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say’st,
‘Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.’

Is this a corollary of Descartes’s “I think; therefore I am”? It is beautiful; therefore it is true? Wallace Stevens once said that the poet recognizes truth because it creates the “right sensation.” That sounds shallow until one reflects on the role of intuition in great intellectual discoveries, from Archimedes discovering the principle of displacement of water while sitting down in the bath, to Mendeleev discovering much of the table of elements in a dream, to Crick and Watson searching only for beautiful DNA molecules because they did not believe that the molecule of life would be ugly.

Poetry, Plato, and the Problem of Truth

Poetry, Plato, and the Problem of Truth continues the Socratic mode of inquiry into poetry but shifts the focal point to the question of how and if we can attain certainty about anything. Truths, or our attempts to attain them, appear in many forms in the text.

A. E. Housman explores the acquisition of understanding in his poem “When I Was One-and-Twenty,” about juvenile overconfidence: