

National Poetry Month – Topic Pages in the Literature Resource Center

Check out these topic pages from Gale’s Literature Resource Center that showcase different poets and types of poetry throughout history.

English Romantic Poetry

Dating from the final decade of the eighteenth century, the Romantic period in English poetry lasted nearly forty years and is considered one of the richest eras in poetry. It is defined in terms of several characteristics, including a reverence for nature, a belief in the innate goodness of the individual, a tendency toward idealism and then melancholy when ideals have failed, and an attraction to things beyond human knowledge: the spiritual, the supernatural, the mythical, and the mystical. In general, the English Romantic poets exalted imagination and feeling over intellect and rationality. For this reason, their work is perceived as a revolt against eighteenth-century Neoclassicism.

Featured Poets (click on the links to view their biographies):

- [John Keats](#)
- [William Blake](#)
- [Samuel Taylor Coleridge](#)
- [William Wordsworth](#)
- [Percy Bysshe Shelley](#)
- [George Gordon, Lord Byron](#)

Sample Representative Work: “[Ozymandias](#)” by Percy Bysshe Shelley

I met a traveler 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.

San Francisco Renaissance Poetry

The San Francisco Renaissance poets were all working in or were drawn to the San Francisco Bay in the late 1940s, after the end of the Second World War. While it is not considered a movement with a dedicated purpose, the poets of the San Francisco Renaissance all eschewed traditional formalist poetry and welcomed experimental writers in various genres, as well as visual artists, into a thriving artistic community in the Bay area. Poets of this Renaissance were inspired by their particular surroundings, and their work is often regional in tone. At the same time, the Renaissance poets were influenced by Asian philosophy, literature, and culture, and by a European sense of cultural modernism and the Surrealism of the European art community.

Featured Poets (click on the links to view their biographies):

- [Allen Ginsberg](#)
- [Joanne Kyger](#)
- [Philip Lamantia](#)
- [Kenneth Rexroth](#)
- [Jack Spicer](#)
- [Michael McClure](#)
- [Lawrence Ferlinghetti](#)

Sample representative work: "Howl" by Allen Ginsberg

This poem is an outcry of anguish against all that Ginsberg felt was unjust, repressive, and harmful to the individual in American society: consumerism, mechanization, and intellectual conformity. At the same time, it is a celebration of the emerging counterculture and an expression of sympathy for its pioneers. Read the work overview and full text [here](#).

Modernist Lyric Poetry

A lyric poem is traditionally understood as a relatively brief, rhymed verse expressed from the point of view of a single speaker, the poet, who addresses the reader directly. Modernist conceptions of the lyric are interpreted as a reaction against the flowering of the form as it developed in the works of the nineteenth-century Romantics. Romantic poets such as William Wordsworth and Samuel Coleridge are often associated with an intensely subjective “I” that turned its back on the social order to focus exclusively on personal emotion. Many poets of the early twentieth century rejected this ahistoricism, as well as the Romantic concentration on musicality, insisting instead on a poetry that looked outward to the world and displayed a greater complexity of thought.

Featured Poets (click on the links to view their biographies):

- [T.S. Eliot](#)
- [H.D. \(Hilda Doolittle\)](#)
- [Edna St. Vincent Millay](#)
- [Hart Crane](#)
- [William Butler Yeats](#)
- [William Carlos Williams](#)

Sample representative work: “[Ashes of Life](#)” by Edna St. Vincent Millay

Love has gone and left me and the days are all alike;
Eat I must, and sleep I will, -- and would that night were here!
But ah! -- to lie awake and hear the slow hours strike!
Would that it were day again! -- with twilight near!

Love has gone and left me and I don't know what to do;
This or that or what you will is all the same to me;
But all the things that I begin I leave before I'm through, --
There's little use in anything as far as I can see.

Love has gone and left me, -- and the neighbors knock and borrow,
And life goes on forever like the gnawing of a mouse, --
And to-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow
There's this little street and this little house.

More Resources

See more poetry topic pages from the Literature Resource Center below!

- [The Rise of Greek Lyric Poetry](#)
- [Italian Epic Poetry](#)
- [American Poetry of the Vietnam War](#)
- [Children's Poetry](#)
- [Shakespeare's Narrative Poetry](#)
- [French Symbolist Poetry](#)