

Fifty Poems to Live by Heart

There are thousands and thousands of poems that speak the language of the soul. Here are 50 of my favorites. Many of these can be found in the books, CDs, and Websites in the Resources list that follows.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "The Holy Longing," trans. Robert Bly

Mary Oliver, "The Summer Day," "The Journey," "When Death Comes"

Galway Kinnell, "Wait," "Saint Francis and the Sow"

D. H. Lawrence, "Song of a Man Who Has Come Through"

Pablo Neruda, "Poetry," "Keeping Quiet," trans. Alastair Reid

William Butler Yeats, "Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop," "The Song of Wandering Aengus"

Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself," part 5

Emily Dickinson, "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" "The Soul selects her own Society"

Elizabeth Bishop, "One Art"

William Shakespeare, Sonnet 29, Sonnet 30

Rainer Maria Rilke, "I am too alone and not alone enough," "You see, I want a lot," "The Man Watching," trans. Robert Bly

Rumi, "Love Dogs," "Undressing," "The Guest House," "A Zero Circle," trans. Coleman Barks

Gerard Manley Hopkins, "As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame," "God's Grandeur"

David Whyte, "Self Portrait," "The Well of Grief"

Kabir, "I talk to my inner lover, and I say, Why such a rush?" "I don't know what sort of God we have been talking about," trans. Robert Bly

Stanley Kunitz, "King of the River," "The Layers"

Marie Howe, "The Gate," "What the Living Do," "Annunciation"

Jane Hirshfield, "Against Certainty," "It Was Like This"

Derek Walcott, "Love after Love"

Juan Ramón Jiménez, "I am not I," "Oceans"

E. E. Cummings, "i thank you god for most this amazing," "somewhere i have never traveled, gladly beyond"

W. S. Merwin, "Thanks," "Just Now"

William Stafford, "A Ritual to Read to Each Other"

Naomi Shihab Nye, "Kindness"

Theodore Roethke, "In a dark time, the eye begins to see"

Wendell Berry, "I go among trees and sit still"

Marina Tsvetaeva, "I know the truth!"

The Nag Hammadi Library, "The Thunder: Perfect Mind," version by Jane Hirshfield