# Poetry Practice

**Poem #1 The Charge of the Light Brigade**

BY [ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/alfred-tennyson)

**I**

Half a league, half a league,

Half a league onward,

All in the valley of Death

Rode the six hundred.

“Forward, the Light Brigade!

Charge for the guns!” he said.

Into the valley of Death

Rode the six hundred.

**II**

“Forward, the Light Brigade!”

Was there a man dismayed?

Not though the soldier knew

Someone had blundered.

Theirs not to make reply,

Theirs not to reason why,

Theirs but to do and die.

Into the valley of Death

Rode the six hundred.

**III**

Cannon to right of them,

Cannon to left of them,

Cannon in front of them

Volleyed and thundered;

Stormed at with shot and shell,

Boldly they rode and well,

Into the jaws of Death,

Into the mouth of hell

Rode the six hundred.

**IV**

Flashed all their sabres bare,

Flashed as they turned in air

Sabring the gunners there,

Charging an army, while

All the world wondered.

Plunged in the battery-smoke

Right through the line they broke;

Cossack and Russian

Reeled from the sabre stroke

Shattered and sundered.

Then they rode back, but not

Not the six hundred.

**V**

Cannon to right of them,

Cannon to left of them,

Cannon behind them

Volleyed and thundered;

Stormed at with shot and shell,

While horse and hero fell.

They that had fought so well

Came through the jaws of Death,

Back from the mouth of hell,

All that was left of them,

Left of six hundred.

**VI**

When can their glory fade?

O the wild charge they made!

All the world wondered.

Honour the charge they made!

Honour the Light Brigade,

Noble six hundred!

**Poem #2**

That time of year thou mayst in me behold  
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang  
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,  
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.  
In me thou seest the twilight of such day **5**  
As after sunset fadeth in the west,  
Which by and by black night doth take away,  
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.

In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire  
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,  **10**  
As the death-bed whereon it must expire  
Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by.

This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more

strong,  
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

**Poem #3**

**I Hear America Singing**

BY [WALT WHITMAN](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/walt-whitman)

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,

Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe and strong,

The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,

The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,

5 The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deckhand singing

on the steamboat deck,

The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as he stands,

The wood-cutter’s song, the ploughboy’s on his way in the morning, or at noon

intermission or at sundown,

The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work, or of the girl

sewing or washing,

Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,

10 The day what belongs to the day—at night the party of young fellows,

robust, friendly,

Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

**Poem #4**

**I, Too**

BY [LANGSTON HUGHES](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/langston-hughes)

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.

They send me to eat in the kitchen

When company comes,

But I laugh, 5

And eat well,

And grow strong.

Tomorrow,

I’ll be at the table

When company comes. 10

Nobody’ll dare

Say to me,

“Eat in the kitchen,”

Then.

Besides, 15

They’ll see how beautiful I am

And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

**Poem #5**

**Barbara Allen**

BY ANONYMOUS

In Scarlet town, where I was born,

   There was a fair maid dwellin’,

Made every youth cry *Well-a-way!*

   Her name was Barbara Allen.

All in the merry month of May,

   When green buds they were swellin’,

Young Jemmy Grove on his death-bed lay,

   For love of Barbara Allen.

He sent his man in to her then,

   To the town where she was dwellin’;

“O haste and come to my master dear,

   If your name be Barbara Allen.”

So slowly, slowly rase she up,

   And slowly she came nigh him,

And when she drew the curtain by—

   “Young man, I think you’re dyin’.”

“O it’s I am sick and very very sick,

   And it’s all for Barbara Allen.”—

O the better for me ye’se never be,

   Tho’ your heart’s blood were a-spillin’!

“O dinna ye mind, young man,” says she,

   “When the red wine ye were fillin’,

That ye made the healths go round and round,

   And slighted Barbara Allen?”

He turned his face unto the wall,

   And death was with him dealin’:

“Adieu, adieu, my dear friends all,

   And be kind to Barbara Allen!”

As she was walking o’er the fields,

   She heard the dead-bell knellin’;

And every jow the dead-bell gave

   Cried “Woe to Barbara Allen.”

“O mother, mother, make my bed,

   O make it saft and narrow:

My love has died for me today,

   I’ll die for him tomorrow.”

“Farewell,” she said, “ye virgins all,

   And shun the fault I fell in:

Henceforth take warning by the fall

   Of cruel Barbara Allen.”

**Poem #6**

**Harlem**

BY [LANGSTON HUGHES](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/langston-hughes)

What happens to a dream deferred?

      Does it dry up

      like a raisin in the sun?

      Or fester like a sore—

      And then run?

      Does it stink like rotten meat?

      Or crust and sugar over—

      like a syrupy sweet?

      Maybe it just sags

      like a heavy load.

*Or does it explode?*