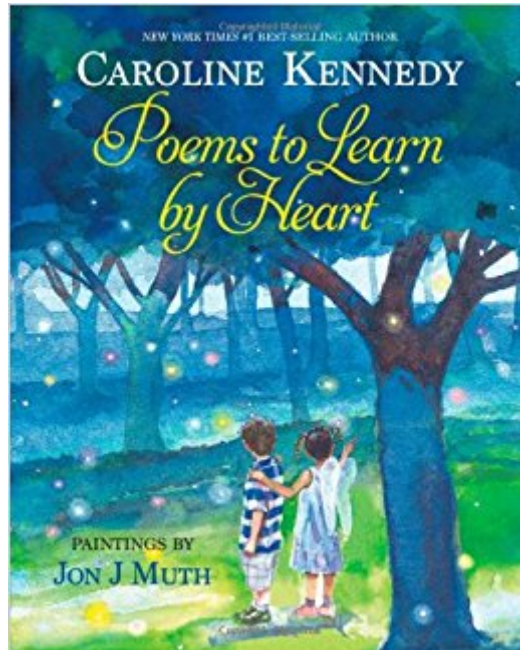




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# Poems To Learn By Heart



## Synopsis

There's a poem to celebrate every moment in life-whether it's hitting a home run, watching a sunset, or laughing with your best friend. A poem is a gift of the heart that can inspire, reassure, or challenge us. Memorize it-share it-it's yours forever. In this diverse collection, a companion to her New York Times #1 best-seller *A Family of Poems*, Caroline Kennedy has chosen more than a hundred poems that speak to all of us: the young and young at heart, readers new to poetry and devoted fans. These poems explore deep emotions, as well as ordinary experiences. They cover the range of human experience and imagination. Divided into sections about nature, sports, monsters and fairies, friendship and family, this book is full of surprises. Each section is preceded by Caroline's thoughtful introduction reflecting her own family's engagement with and enjoyment of poetry. Illustrated with striking watercolor paintings by award-winning artist Jon J Muth, this is truly a book for all ages and interests, and one that families will want to share for years to come.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 192 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 187 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #3,111 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #47 in *Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry* #188 in *Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life*

Age Range: 1 - 11 years

Grade Level: 5 - 9

## Customer Reviews

Gr 5 Up-Poetry is surely a many splendored thing in this richly conceived compendium of poets and ideas. Using the handsome format of *A Family of Poems* (Hyperion, 2005), Kennedy and Muth gather and depict a broader, more complex array of poems, inviting the enjoyment of varied readers and audiences. Kennedy's introductory comments on the value of memorizing poetry note the growing popularity of poetry recitation in festivals, slams, and other competitive events. A major

emphasis throughout the book, in introductions to the topical sections and the wide-ranging choice of poems, is the deep pleasure poetry provides its readers, reciters, and writers. Some of the topics-family, school, nonsense poems, fairies, and ogres-suggest children as readers, and some poems are old childhood favorites. All of the sections have many sophisticated selections, however, and there's a section of war poems that includes Martin Niemöller's "First They Came for the Jews," along with much older pieces. Passages from *The Metamorphoses* and the Bible, along with "Baby Ate a Microchip" and "The Cremation of Sam McGee," are among the many choices made by Kennedy and her teenage partners from New York City schools. Muth's watercolor paintings stretch widely, too, in small sketches on white pages, broad comic scenes, and lovely views on softly washed backgrounds. The cover picture of two young children, one with fairy wings, facing a forest dotted with flashing bits of light, lends a rather false cue. Families and teachers will find enjoyable bits to share, and older children, teens, and adults will find much to savor in this fine tribute to the powers of poetry.

-Margaret Bush, Simmons College, Boston

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**\*Starred Review\*** Kennedy, who has edited several poetry books, waxes eloquently on the sturdy reasons for memorizing poetry: the empowerment and confidence it can bring. But she doesn't skip on the sheer delight of the exercise itself. In this volume, Kennedy has collected more than 100 poems of all sizes for a wide-ranging audience, and she has divided them into chapters, which all begin with her own introductions. Included are poems about self, school, sports, games, and war, as well as nonsense poems. With thoughtfulness and occasional whimsy, Kennedy explains how and why particular poems were selected. And a fine collection it is •one that will grab the audience. Gertrude Stein tells children, "When I wish a dish / I wish a dish of ham." Henry Van Dyke asks them to consider the ramifications of time: "New days, / New ways / Pass by! / Love stays. Many favorite established poets are here, but younger voices are represented, too. The breadth of the poetry is heightened by Muth's arresting watercolors, and with his pairings, he shows an acute sense of when the images should stay small and when they should blossom into full flower, such as the pink camellia that opens the chapter on nature. A wonderful resource to get kids reading, thinking, talking about, and yes, memorizing poetry. --Ilene Cooper

I really wish I had read the negative reviews for this book before purchasing it. If you're searching for a book to share with preschool or early elementary-aged children, read on. If not, this review is

probably not for you. As a parent of 3 children under the age of 7, I was so excited to share this book with my little ones. Based on the title and the front cover, the age range listed as "1-11" years, and the "Disney-Hyperion" publisher, I mistakenly assumed this book would be suitable for young children. It most definitely isn't. I was expecting lighthearted, beautiful poems that people would naturally WANT to learn by heart - uplifting poems that people enjoy reciting and listening to - but I was terribly disappointed. Here are some of the titles: O dear! How disgusting is life! The Cremation of Sam McGee Bad Morning Ballad of Birmingham (On the bombing of a church in Birmingham, Alabama, 1963) Evil A Poison Tree There's also an entire section devoted to poems about war, which includes a poem that says, "After the battle, flat and still upon a hillside now he lies..." or "What's That?" - about a horrible monster leaning over the child's bed. Finally, there's the one that made me close the book in disgust: from "Voices Rising": "My voice rises for the girls trapped in four walls with men who think they're sexy" AND "Little girls, my voice rises over your screams of broken innocence." What the heck??? I understand the need for powerful poetry that deals with dark emotions, or social and political issues. I am not opposed to it, at all. What I AM opposed to is that kind of poetry being included in a book that is marketed towards adults AND children. As I mentioned before, it does have some great poems, and the illustrations are beautiful, but I might exchange it for something else. Make sure to use the "Look Inside" option on the product page to view all the titles included in this book. Unfortunately for me, that option wasn't available when I ordered this book! If you're looking for a poetry book for adolescents and adults, this one is okay. If you're looking for a poetry book that you can share with young children - look ELSEWHERE, especially if you're thinking about gifting it to a young child for independent reading.

Wonderful Poetry.

Wonderful

great

A great book to read with children and to use as a reference when needed for celebrations and public speaking. It is part of our cultural heritage.

What a wonderful collection! This book runs the gamut of poems written hundreds of years ago, poems that make you smile, poems that make you cry, poems that make you laugh, poems that

make you wonder. Beautifully illustrated, I was happy to give this book to three people as Christmas gifts. And each person, from 20 to 60+ years, has told me how they will enjoy this book forever.

If I had loads of money, I would buy all of these. I have purchased six, so far. I give them to my friends with small children. They all have loved it!

I gave this book to my 5 year old son and to his 8 year old girlfriend. It is one I hope they will enjoy for years to come, having fun reading it's diverse contemporary and historical poetry and finding achievement in memorizing perhaps a poem for each birthday, or each month! I told the 8 year old, if you do that, by the time you're 20, poetry and learning poems by heart will be a lifelong cherished habit. Thank you, Caroline Kennedy for this valuable and beautifully illustrated book of poems!

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