

## Foreword

There's a poem in this book that I first heard when I was very small. It is Poem 97 'Nod' by Walter de la Mare. My mother used to read it to me, from an anthology she had won as a school prize. Many years later, when she was very old and losing her memory, I read it to her and she joined in. That poem had stayed with her when nearly everything else was gone. After she died I asked a friend to read it at her funeral.

Coming across 'Nod' was like meeting an old friend. There are other old friends here, some of whom I first got to know at primary school. I've always liked Poem 72 'Cargoes' by John Masefield – and Poem 96 'When a Knight Won his Spurs' by Jan Struther, which we used to sing in assembly.

Then there are poems that I got to know and love when I was older. Edward Thomas is one of my favourite poets, so I was glad to find three by him: Poem 6 'Lights Out', Poem 18 'Thaw' and Poem 99 'Adlestrop'. Charles Causley is another favourite – read Poem 27 'What has Happened to Lulu?' and Poem 57 'Good Morning, Mr Croco-doco-dile' to see if you agree. Perhaps the two most famous poems in the book are Poem 43 'Daffodils' by William Wordsworth and the sonnet beginning *Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?* by William Shakespeare, presented here as Poem 87 'Eighteenth Sonnet'. I know both of those by heart, so I can take them with me everywhere.

As well as the old friends, there are poems I didn't know and poets whose names are new to me. Some of these may well become favourites as I explore the book and re-read the ones I like best. But I don't expect to like everything. There may be some poems in this book that don't appeal to you. If so, don't give up on poetry. Look for the ones you like and read them again and again. They may well become friends for life.

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