

## April 2026 Book Club: A Collection of Poetry

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[The Goose Girl](#), Edna St. Vincent Millay (1921)

[The City In The Sea](#), Edgar Allen Poe (1845)

[The Ocean](#), Nathaniel Hawthorne (1825)

The final two stanzas of [The Haglets](#), Herman Melville (1888)

[Citizen of Dark Times](#), Kim Stafford (2019)

[The Listeners](#), Walter de la Mare (1912)

[Ode to My Socks](#), Pablo Neruda (1956)

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### The Goose Girl, Edna St. Vincent Millay (1921)

Spring rides no horses down the hill,  
But comes on foot, a goose-girl still.  
And all the loveliest things there be  
Come simply, so, it seems to me.  
If ever I said, in grief or pride,  
I tired of honest things, I lied:  
And should be cursed forevermore  
With Love in laces, like a whore,  
And neighbours cold, and friends unsteady,  
And Spring on horseback, like a lady!

## The City in the Sea, Edgar Allan Poe (1845)

LO! Death has reared himself a throne  
In a strange city lying alone  
Far down within the dim West,  
Where the good and the bad and the worst and the best  
Have gone to their eternal rest.  
There shrines and palaces and towers  
(Time-eaten towers that tremble not!)  
Resemble nothing that is ours.  
Around, by lifting winds forgot,  
Resignedly beneath the sky  
The melancholy waters lie.  
No rays from the holy heaven come down  
On the long night-time of that town;  
But light from out the lurid sea  
Streams up the turrets silently —  
Gleams up the pinnacles far and free —  
Up domes — up spires — up kingly halls —  
Up fanes — up Babylon-like walls —  
Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers  
Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers —  
Up many and many a marvellous shrine  
Whose wreathed friezes intertwine  
The viol, the violet, and the vine.  
Resignedly beneath the sky  
The melancholy waters lie.  
So blend the turrets and shadows there  
That all seem pendulous in air,  
While from a proud tower in the town  
Death looks gigantically down.  
There open fanes and gaping graves  
Yawn level with the luminous waves;  
But not the riches there that lie  
In each idol's diamond eye —  
Not the gaily-jewelled dead  
Tempt the waters from their bed;  
For no ripples curl, alas!  
Along that wilderness of glass —

No swellings tell that winds may be  
Upon some far-off happier sea —  
No heavings hint that winds have been  
On seas less hideously serene.  
But lo, a stir is in the air!  
The wave — there is a movement there!  
As if the towers had thrown aside,  
In slightly sinking, the dull tide —  
As if their tops had feebly given  
A void within the filmy Heaven.  
The waves have now a redder glow —  
The hours are breathing faint and low —  
And when, amid no earthly moans,  
Down, down that town shall settle hence.  
Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,  
Shall do it reverence.

### The Ocean, Nathaniel Hawthorne (1825)

The Ocean has its silent caves,  
Deep, quiet, and alone;  
Though there be fury on the waves,  
Beneath them there is none.  
The awful spirits of the deep  
Hold their communion there;  
And there are those for whom we weep,  
The young, the bright, the fair.

Calmly the wearied seamen rest  
Beneath their own blue sea.  
The ocean solitudes are blest,  
For there is purity.  
The earth has guilt, the earth has care,  
Unquiet are its graves;  
But peaceful sleep is ever there,  
Beneath the dark blue waves.

Final stanza of The Haglets, Herman Melville (1888)

Imbedded deep with shells  
And drifted treasure deep,  
Forever he sinks deeper in  
Unfathomable sleep—  
His cannon round him thrown,  
His sailors at his feet,  
The wizard sea enchanting them  
Where never haglets beat.

On nights when meteors play  
And light the breakers dance,  
The Oreads from the caves  
With silvery elves advance;  
And up from ocean stream,  
And down from heaven far,  
The rays that blend in dream  
The abysm and the star.

Citizen of Dark Times, Kim Stafford (2019)

Agenda in a time of fear: Be not afraid.  
When things go wrong, do right.  
Set out by the half-light of the seeker.  
For the well-lit problem begins to heal.  
Learn tropism toward the difficult.  
We have not arrived to explain, but to sing.  
Young idealism ripens into an ethical life.  
Prune back regret to let faith grow.  
When you hit rock bottom, dig farther down.  
Grief is the seed of singing, shame the seed of song.  
Keep seeing what you are not saying.  
Plunder your reticence.  
Songbird guards a twig, its only weapon a song.

## The Listeners, Walter de la Mare (1912)

'Is there anybody there?' said the Traveller,  
Knocking on the moonlit door;  
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses  
Of the forest's ferny floor:  
And a bird flew up out of the turret,  
Above the Traveller's head:  
And he smote upon the door again a second time;  
'Is there anybody there?' he said.  
But no one descended to the Traveller;  
No head from the leaf-fringed sill  
Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,  
Where he stood perplexed and still.  
But only a host of phantom listeners  
That dwelt in the lone house then  
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight  
To that voice from the world of men:  
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,  
That goes down to the empty hall,  
Harkening in an air stirred and shaken  
By the lonely Traveller's call.  
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,  
Their stillness answering his cry,  
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,  
'Neath the starred and leafy sky;

For he suddenly smote on the door, even  
Louder, and lifted his head:—  
'Tell them I came, and no one answered,  
That I kept my word,' he said.  
Never the least stir made the listeners,  
Though every word he spake  
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house  
From the one man left awake:  
Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,  
And the sound of iron on stone,  
And how the silence surged softly backward,  
When the plunging hoofs were gone.

## Ode to My Socks, Pablo Neruda (1956)

Maru Mori brought me  
a pair  
of socks  
which she knitted  
herself  
with her sheepherder's  
hands,  
two socks as soft  
as rabbits.  
I slipped my feet  
into them  
as though into  
two  
cases  
knitted  
with threads of  
twilight  
and goatskin.  
Violent socks,  
my feet were  
two fish made  
of wool,  
two long sharks  
sea-blue, shot  
through  
by one golden thread,  
two immense blackbirds,  
two cannons:  
my feet  
were honored  
in this way  
by  
these  
heavenly  
socks.  
They were  
so handsome

for the first time  
my feet seemed to me  
unacceptable  
like two decrepit  
firemen, firemen  
unworthy  
of that woven  
fire,  
of those glowing  
socks.

Nevertheless  
I resisted  
the sharp temptation  
to save them  
somewhere  
as schoolboys  
keep  
fireflies,  
as learned men  
collect  
sacred texts,  
I resisted  
the mad impulse  
to put them  
into a golden  
cage  
and each day give them  
birdseed  
and pieces of pink  
melon.  
Like explorers  
in the jungle who hand  
over the very rare  
green deer  
to the spit  
and eat it

with remorse,  
I stretched out  
my feet  
and pulled on  
the magnificent  
socks  
and then my shoes.

The moral  
of my ode is this:  
beauty is twice  
beauty  
and what is good is  
doubly  
good  
when it is a matter of  
two socks  
made of wool  
in winter.