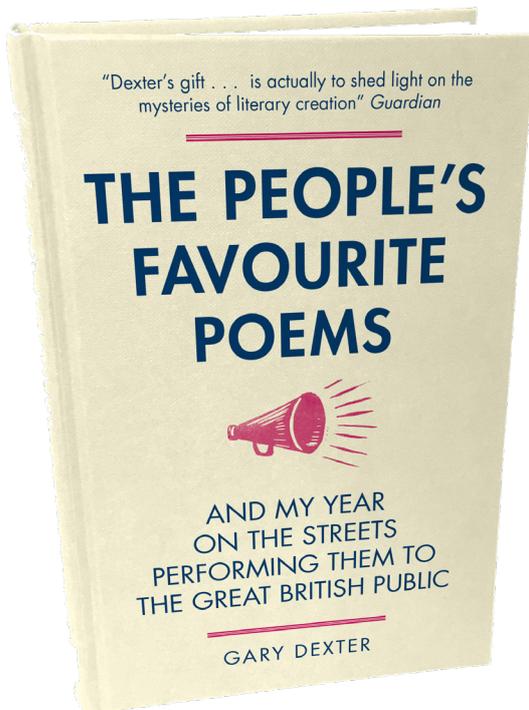


# PRESS RELEASE

THE PEOPLE'S FAVOURITE POEMS • GARY DEXTER • POETRY/MEMOIR

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**AN ORIGINAL, CHARMING AND ILLUMINATING  
LOOK AT THE POEMS WE LOVE MOST –  
FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE...**

When a painful eye condition forces Gary Dexter to give up his work as a writer, he has to rethink how to earn a living. His solution? Learn as many poems as possible then hit the streets, offering to recite them in return for a cash donation.

A drunk soldier mourning a fallen comrade in Afghanistan requests Auden's "Funeral Blues" and turns nasty when the nervous performer fluffs a line.

At a service station on the M1, a lady orders him to sway 'like a daffodil' as he recites Wordsworth's classic.

A security guard marches him out of Primark while he defiantly intones "Invictus" by W.E. Henley ("I am the captain of my soul...").

In these remarkable meetings of poetry and people, Dexter takes the nation's poetic pulse, and along the way learns a lot about himself.

A delightful blend of anthology and anecdote, memoir and criticism, *The People's Favourite Poems* is a truly original book about the poems we love most, for better or for worse...

## PRAISE FOR GARY DEXTER'S WORK

'Dexter's gift is not only to uncover the stories behind the titles, but actually to shed light on the mysteries of literary creation'  
*Guardian*

'There are a few books that try to be funny about literature and don't ever really get it right; Dexter always does' Nick Lezard

'Wonderful ... stuffed with period detail, literary gags and cameo parts (including a monosyllabic Oscar Wilde). The whole thing is a delight'  
*Sunday Telegraph on Natural Desire in Healthy Women*

- **Includes the nation's 30 most popular poems, as tested on streets, outside pubs and in service stations up and down the land**

- **Published on National Poetry Day**

- **The author has frequently appeared as a guest on national radio shows, including the Jeremy Vine show on BBC radio 2**

- **A perfect Xmas gift for poetry lovers of all stripes (or poetry haters ripe for conversion!)**

- **PTO for a list of the poems included.**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gary Dexter is the author of several acclaimed works of non-fiction, including *Why Not Catch-22?* ("Dexter's gift is actually to shed light on the mysteries of literary creation" *Guardian*) and *At Night: A Guide for the Wakeful* ("this strange little book arrives to give us hope and succour" Marcus Berkman). His fiction includes *All the Materials for a Midnight Feast* ("one of the year's most impressive debuts" *Sunday Telegraph*) and *Natural Desire in Healthy Women*: ("This deft and very funny novel features a manically laughing Gandhi, a preposterous H. G. Wells and, most unexpectedly, some very amusing appearances by T. S. Eliot. Bravo!" *Daily Mail*).

He lives and versifies in Norwich, with occasional forays into London, Devon and Japan.

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**PLEASE NOTE: OLD STREET IS NOW DISTRIBUTED BY CENTRAL BOOKS**  
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# The People's Favourite Poems

*(as witnessed by the author during a year spent performing poetry on the streets, outside the pubs and in the motorway service stations of England and Wales)*

1. 'If—' by Rudyard Kipling
2. 'This Be the Verse' by Philip Larkin
3. 'Dulce et Decorum Est' by Wilfred Owen
4. 'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud' by William Wordsworth
5. 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening' by Robert Frost
6. 'Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night' by Dylan Thomas
7. 'The Raven' by Edgar Allan Poe
8. 'The Tyger' by William Blake
9. 'Funeral Blues' by WH Auden
10. 'Sonnet 18: Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day?' by William Shakespeare
11. 'On the Ning Nang Nong' by Spike Milligan
12. 'Invictus: The Unconquerable' by WE Henley
13. 'Macavity, the Mystery Cat' by TS Eliot
14. 'He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven' by WB Yeats
15. 'Ozymandias' by Percy Bysshe Shelley
16. 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' by Alfred Tennyson
17. 'Because I could not stop for Death –' by Emily Dickinson
18. 'Bluebird' by Charles Bukowski
19. 'Leisure' by WH Davies
20. 'Jabberwocky' by Lewis Carroll
21. 'Remember' by Christina Rossetti
22. 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' by TS Eliot
23. 'Not Waving but Drowning' by Stevie Smith
24. 'The Flea' by John Donne
25. 'A Subaltern's Love Song' by John Betjeman
26. 'The Life that I Have' by Leo Marks
27. 'Cargoes' by John Masefield
28. 'Adlestrop' by Edward Thomas
29. 'Bright Star' by John Keats
30. 'Pied Beauty' by Gerard Manley Hopkins