# Audio file – David Mason on knowing poems by heart

[20-Track-20.mp3](https://neagov-my.sharepoint.com/personal/travisd_arts_gov/Documents/Transcribed%20Files/20-Track-20.mp3)

Dana Gioia

Here again is David Mason.

David Mason

Poetry first attracted me as a boy because my parents read it aloud to me, and I've always thought of it as an oral art more than a visual one. Some surface charm or intriguing sound has to be present for poems to lure me, and I've always been fond of getting them by heart so I can carry them around in my head without a book. For one thing, I've often found myself alone, either hiking great distances or working out of doors, and have been glad to have poems and songs by heart so I could entertain myself. I always like reciting them to my friends and family when occasion allows. Poems can dignify small moments in our lives, turning them into ceremonies of awareness. Ultimately, that's what poetry is about for me, it's a kind of verbal awareness of being alive in the world.