POETRY IN AMERICA

A SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

Submitted to: **THE POETRY FOUNDATION**

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INTRODUCTION

Poetry in America is the first national, in-depth survey of people's attitudes toward and experiences with poetry. The survey was conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago on behalf of The Poetry Foundation and focused primarily on the existing and potential audiences for poetry. The survey was limited to "readers," that is those individuals who reported that outside of work or school, they read books, magazines or newspapers; and that more than half of this reading was in English.

For this study, we investigated participant's leisure time pursuits and general reading habits, early and more recent experiences with poetry, their perceptions of poets and poetry readers, their favorite poems, and their experiences with coming across poetry in unexpected places. The survey sample includes more than 1,000 adult readers with varying levels of interest in poetry: adults who currently read or listen to poetry, those who have read or listened to poetry in the past but no longer do so, and those who have never read poetry.

Poetry in America was designed to answer five critical questions:

1) What are the characteristics of poetry's current audience?
2) What factors are associated with people's ongoing participation with poetry?
3) What are people's perceptions of poetry, poets and poetry readers?
4) What hinders those people without a strong interest in poetry from becoming more engaged with this art form?
5) What steps might be taken to broaden the audience for poetry in the United States?

This report summarizes the key findings and recommendations from the *Poetry in America* study to provide a snapshot of poetry's role in society today. This study serves as a benchmark against which The Poetry Foundation and other literary and cultural organizations can measure the impact of programs intended to broaden and deepen people's involvement with poetry. Furthermore, we anticipate that these findings will enable the Poetry Foundation and others to identify potential poetry audiences and the mechanisms by which members of these populations might be drawn into participating further in reading, listening to, and writing poetry.

We understand that poetry and other literary forms serve important purposes – they celebrate our culture, create economic opportunities, educate our citizenry, and enhance our lives. Literature challenges us to think about ourselves and the world around us in new ways. To this end, it is important to understand the experiences that encourage and those that inhibit encounters with literature. *Poetry in America* brings to light some of the factors that are related to people's involvement with poetry, and begins to delineate the ways in which one literary form-- poetry, benefits those who read and listen to it. It also provides important information on the audiences that might be persuaded to participate and engage poetry if opportunities were provided.

I POETRY'S AUDIENCES

One of *Poetry in America*'s primary objectives was to determine who constitutes poetry's audience. One of the first steps in the Foundation's efforts to develop effective programs is to determine which groups participate in poetry, and to what extent they read, listen, and write poetry. This study examined who participates in poetry currently - during the past five years – who has fallen away (more than five years ago), and who never participated in poetry.

Eligible respondents were classified into two major groups – the 'poetry audience' and the 'potential audience'. The Poetry Audience is comprised of those individuals who have read poetry, listened to poetry, or both within the last five years. The Potential Audience consists of those individuals who read for pleasure but have never read or listened to poetry or who have not read or listened to poetry within the last five years. For this report, we focus largely upon the differences between these two groups as well as certain distinctions within each group to assist the Poetry Foundation in developing and tailoring programs intended to increase participation in poetry.

The *Poetry in America* survey used a random digit dial (RDD) sample of telephone numbers from across the United States. Adults who read for pleasure, that is, reading that is not required for work or school, and who read primarily in English were eligible for the study. One respondent per household was randomly selected to participate.

It is important to remember, when reading this report, that we did not interview the general population of adults. We spoke with a sample of adult readers, a group of people who are different in a number of important ways from the general population.

Demographic comparisons between respondents to the 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (2002 SPPA) who reported that they had read poetry in the year prior to their interview, and a subset of current poetry readers from *Poetry in America* who read poetry in the last 12 months reveal few significant differences between these two groups of poetry readers. Considering the overall similarities between the subsets of poetry readers for each study, one can infer that the *Poetry in America* study, like the 2002 SPPA, accounts for about 14 percent of the general population. Compared to the 2002 SPPA, *Poetry in America* includes fewer young adults between the ages of 18-24 and more adults aged 75 years or older, fewer white Americans, and fewer people with less than a college education. These differences may be due to differences in the definition of poetry and other design decisions or differences in the sample.

Poetry in America provided all respondents with a definition of poetry. Each respondent was read the following,

> *"In this study, I will ask you questions about poems or poetry. Poetry is unique because it uses rhythm and language in verses to create images in the mind of the reader. Sometimes poetry rhymes, but not always. I will use the words 'poetry' or 'poems' to refer to verses intended to be understood as poems, not as part of something else such as rap, song lyrics, Bible verses, or greeting card messages."*

For this study, we included individuals as part of the poetry audience if they read or listened to poetry in the last five years. We included poetry that was read during one's leisure time.

KEY DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

We compared the poetry audience with the potential audience with respect to seven key demographic characteristics: gender, race, age, education, employment status, marital status and income. We found that gender, age, race, marital status and education are independent predictors of one's participation while employment status and income is not. Women, African Americans, and people with graduate degrees are more likely to be part of the poetry audience than the potential audience. While audience members tend to be under 55 years of age, young adults between the ages of 18-24 are more likely to be part of the current poetry audience, and older adults between the ages of 55 and 75 are more likely to be members of the potential audience. People who have never married are more likely to be in the current audience while those who are currently married are more likely to be part of the potential audience. Twenty-four percent of the poetry audience has never married compared to 12 percent of the potential audience, but this is probably a consequence of the higher number of young people in the audience group.

The relationship between poetry participation and age is particularly interesting. As people age, they become less likely to read or listen to poetry. Seventy percent of the Poetry audience is under the age of fifty-five, whereas only 55 percent of the potential audience is below this age. Young adults, aged 18-24 years old are also more likely to be part of the current audience than the potential audience.

Overall, 73 percent of the participants in *Poetry in America* have children. Given the significant differences in marital status between poetry audience and the potential audience, it is not surprising that the potential audience for poetry (83 percent) is significantly more likely to have children than are members of the current audience (64 percent).

ALLOCATING LEISURE TIME

The availability of free time affects individual's leisure pursuits. We asked all respondents to estimate the amount of free time that they have each week to engage in leisure activities. Respondents were also asked to estimate the total hours per week they usually work. On average, participants in the *Poetry in America* study reported having 4.3 hours of free time on a typical week day and 7.2 hours of free time on a typical weekend day.

Free time is most abundant among young adults, and among people who are not employed or married. We found evidence of gender differences in amount of available free time such that men, despite reporting nine more hours of work per week than women, also report seven more hours of free time per week. We found only minor differences between Blacks and Whites in terms of leisure and work time. We found only minor differences between the current and potential poetry audiences with respect to the number of hours they work each week and their available free time. These minor differences suggest that lack of leisure time is unlikely to be a major barrier to increased poetry use among people who do not currently engage with this art form. Nonetheless, 32 percent of the potential audience reported that it did not read or listen to poetry because of lack of time.

We also asked all respondents which of a series of activities they engage in during their free time. Interestingly, the current poetry audience actually participates in these activities at significantly higher rates in nearly all areas, except for watching television. Potential audience members are significantly more likely to watch television than are the poetry audience. The poetry audience is more likely to listen to music, play sports, volunteer and attend cultural events than are members of the potential audience.

The image of the poetry audience that emerges from our examination of their leisure habits is not the picture of socially isolated individuals that some anecdotes often suggest. Instead, what we see is a group of very active adults who engage in a wide variety of leisure of activities and who enjoy active social lives. In addition to participating at higher rates in almost all activities, poetry audience members also reported socializing more frequently in the week prior to their interview.

PARTICIPATION IN POETRY

We found that 94 percent of readers indicate that they have read poetry at some point in their lives, whether as an adult, teenager or youth. Almost 60 percent of members of the poetry audience indicate that they've read poetry throughout their lives, that is, they report reading poetry as an adult, as a teen, and as a child. In contrast, only 15 percent of the potential audience report engaging poetry at all three life stages. Most members of the potential audience indicate that they read poetry as teenagers or children, or during their teenage years only, accounting for 62 percent of the potential audience.

The Poetry Foundation's primary concern is with the reading and listening audiences for poetry. However, stakeholders and participants in the qualitative research phase of this project felt it was important to collect information about people's experiences writing poetry. We asked all participants about their experiences writing poetry as adults, and we asked those who wrote poetry about their experiences performing their own poetry. Thirty-six percent of all readers have written poetry as adults. Poetry audience members are significantly more likely to write poetry (45 percent) than are members of the potential audience, less than 1 percent of whom have written poetry as adults. Just over one-quarter of the adults who have written poetry (27 percent) have performed their own poetry in public.

We asked people who had written poetry as adults how recently they had done so. In general, respondents' experiences writing poetry mirrored their experiences reading or listening to poetry – members of the poetry audience were more likely to have written poetry within the last year and potential audience members were more likely to have written poetry 10 or more years ago.

II FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO ONGOING PARTICIPATION WITH POETRY

EARLY LIFE EXPERIENCES WITH POETRY

As we indicated earlier, most people begin their relationship with poetry early in their lives, usually around the time that they are teenagers. For some, that early relationship persists into adulthood while for others, poetry never becomes a lifelong interest.

Poetry in America explored how parents may transmit an appreciation of poetry to their children. First, we asked all respondents if a parent or other child read nursery rhymes or books like Dr. Seuss to them when they were children. Nursery rhymes and books like Dr. Seuss may be considered poetry that is suitable for young children. Seventy-seven percent of all respondents reported that someone had read these types of poetry to them when they were young. Poetry audience members (80 percent) were significantly more likely to report having had nursery rhymes or books like Dr. Seuss read to them than were members of the potential audience (68 percent). We then asked all respondents if an adult or other child had read other types of poetry to them. Overall, 45 percent of all respondents reported that someone had read other types of poetry to them. Here, the differences between current and potential audiences are dramatic. More than half (52 percent) of the current audience had been read other types of poetry while only one-quarter (25 percent) of the potential audience had been read other types of poetry.

By and large, most respondents' early experiences with poetry were favorable. Of the participants who had been read either nursery rhymes, books like Dr. Seuss, or other types of poetry when they were children, 77 percent rated these experiences as "mostly positive." However, current audience members were significantly more likely to rate these experiences as "mostly positive" than were potential members. However, less than 1 percent of participants rated these experiences as "mostly negative."

All parents who participated in the study were asked questions about reading poetry to their own children. Of the parents who participated in the study, 93 percent said that they had read nursery rhymes or books like Dr. Seuss to their children. A higher proportion of the poetry audience (95 percent) read these child-friendly types of poetry to their children than did those in the potential audience (88 percent). Fewer parents read other types of poetry to their children. Overall, 60 percent of the parents we interviewed read other types of poetry to their children. In our preliminary interviews, many respondents also cited the importance of exposure to poetry during the childhood.

" I grew up in small family and I didn't grow up with TV, and very little radio. My family, we were supposed to be in touch with poetry. My mother recited poetry. That was our entertainment." (Female, Artist/Writer, Current Audience)

A significantly higher percentage of poetry audience (71 percent) read other types of poetry to their children than do members of the potential audience. Twenty-nine percent of the potential audience read poetry other than nursery rhymes and books like Dr. Seuss to their children. These data suggest that generational transmission may play an important role in the development of adult poetry fans.

POETRY IN THE CLASSROOM

Eighty percent of the *Poetry in America* respondents studied poetry in school. Of these respondents, 55 percent studied poetry in elementary or grammar school, 61 percent in middle school or junior high school, 87 percent studied in high school, and 49 percent studied poetry in college. Current poetry audience members were significantly more likely to have studied poetry at every grade level than were potential audience members. Overall, 82 percent of the poetry audience studied poetry in school compared to 73 percent of the potential audience. Most respondents who studied poetry in school did so at the high school level.

We asked respondents about the kinds of educational activities they engaged in when they studied poetry in school regardless of the level at which they studied. Nearly all respondents were required to read a poem as part of their educational experiences. Current poetry audiences tended to have a more comprehensive experience of poetry in the classroom. Significantly more members of the poetry audience than the potential audience engaged in each of the educational activities asked about in this study. More than 80 percent of the current poetry audience who studied poetry in school memorized, recited and wrote a poem in addition to reading poetry in school. In comparison, fewer than 70 percent of the potential audience engaged in these kinds of educational activities. The types of educational activities that respondents engaged in were not related to their ratings of their in-school experiences with poetry.

One very interesting finding of the *Poetry in America* study is the relationship between respondents' early school perceptions of poetry and current perceptions and behaviors. Compared to respondents' favorable ratings of their early experiences with poetry outside of school, ratings of in-school experiences with poetry were somewhat less favorable. Sixty-eight percent of the respondents who studied poetry in school rated that experience as mostly favorable (80 percent rated their out-of-school experiences as "mostly positive"). Twenty-seven percent had a neutral experience with studying poetry in school and 5 percent rated their in-school experiences as "mostly negative". The current poetry audience was significantly more likely to report that their in-school experiences were "mostly positive" than were potential members. Potential audience members were equally likely to rate their in-school experiences with poetry as neutral as they were to rate them as "mostly positive."

Our earlier qualitative work highlighted the influential role that one person can play in the development of an appreciation of poetry, and it was often a teacher or a relative:

"For me, in 2nd grade I had this amazing teacher who was obsessed with poetry. And then during my senior year in high school I had a teacher who was great. This was in a South Jersey public school." (Male, Actor, Current Poetry Audience)

"I did not have any outstanding teacher. But I did have a relative who is a poet herself. That made me enamored with all kinds of poetry, and a few friends too…" (Female, Teacher, Current Poetry Audience)

Focus groups discussions with people with little or no interest in poetry brought to light some of the experiences, particularly school experiences that can dissuade people from further engaging with this art form.

"Part of teaching at that time was memory which was supposed to stimulate the brain, and recall of poems…..it was 'not fun'". (Male, Social Worker, Potential Audience)

Eighty-six percent of all respondents report early experiences with poetry. When asked about the people or experiences they associate with them, 55 percent said that there is a person or persons they associate with those early experiences. Members of the current poetry audience were nearly twice as likely as potential members to say that they associate someone with their early experiences – 61 percent of current audience members associate someone with their early experiences compared to 36 percent of the potential audience. Parents and teachers were frequently named as influences by both current and potential audience members; however, potential members were more likely to name one specific teacher as an early influence and current audience members were more likely to name a parent.

Respondents were less likely to recall a particular experience than they were to recall a particular teacher or teachers associated with their early exposure to poetry. Overall, 37 percent of respondents who reported early experiences with poetry recalled a specific, memorable experience while a majority of all respondents recall a teacher or teachers. Poetry audience members were overwhelmingly more likely to recall an early event. Ninety percent of the people who remembered an early event associated with poetry were poetry audience members.

ACCESS TO POETRY

Over 70 percent of the reading population has library cards, but the poetry audience is significantly more likely than are potential audience members to be library cardholders. However, both current and potential poetry audiences report relatively high rates of library membership at 73 and 62 percent respectively. About one-third of the current poetry audience reports reading books of poetry at or borrowing books of poetry from the library. In spite of these very high numbers of library membership, few current or potential audience members report attending events related to poetry at a library or at bookstores.

While book clubs seem a logical avenue for reaching poetry's audience, the data indicate that very few readers (6 percent) belong to book clubs. Of those readers who are book club members, about third read poetry with their group.

According to the Pew Internet Survey, 63 percent of the population has access to the Internet. The population of readers has a much higher access rate, with 83 percent of readers indicating they have access to the Internet, with no significant difference in access rates of for current and potential audiences. But, when asked if they use the Internet for poetry-related information, not surprisingly, significant differences emerge with poetry audience members being significantly more likely to use the Internet for poetry-related information than potential audience members.

It is, however, worth noting that while the poetry audience (and other readers) is more likely than the general adult population to have access to the Internet, only a small percentage use the Internet for poetry-related information. Only slightly more than one-third of the poetry audience with Internet access used the Internet to find, read, or listen to poetry and fewer used the Internet to obtain information about poetry events.

SHARING POETRY

We asked all respondents, regardless of whether they, themselves, read or listen to poetry, about poetry purchases they made over the past five years. We asked these questions of the potential audience because members may have bought poetry products for someone other than themselves. Books are more popular purchases than are CDs or other media for listening to poetry among both the poetry audience and potential audience members. The most interesting finding is not that people are buying poetry, but that they buy most often for others. Over the past five years, 21 percent of people who purchased poetry bought books for themselves and no one else, and 24 percent bought CDs exclusively for themselves. In comparison, more than 40 percent of poetry book purchasers bought books for someone else and did not buy any for themselves in the past five years. Similarly, 38 percent of the respondents who purchased poetry audiovisual media, bought solely for someone else.

EXPOSURE TO POETRY

Of the 1,023 adults who participated in *Poetry in America*, all but 9 have been incidentally exposed to poetry. Not surprisingly, the poetry audience is significantly more likely than the potential audience to experience poetry incidentally. On average, all respondents indicated 5.5 situations in which they have been unintentionally exposed to poetry, with audience members reporting an average of 5.8 instances and the potential audience reporting an average of 4.8. These differences should be interpreted with caution as they may simply reflect pre-existing differences in the salience of poetry for both of these groups. Because of their interest in poetry, current poetry readers and listeners may be more apt to notice poetry in unexpected places than are potential audience members.

Poetry is most often experienced unintentionally at private ceremonies such as weddings and funerals, with eighty percent of the potential audience and more than ninety percent of the current audience reporting that they've been exposed to poetry at one of these private occasions. While it appears that public transportation has the lowest levels of effective exposure, this is merely an artifact of the small number of respondents who commute via public transportation. Seventy-nine percent of the respondents who commute by train, bus or subway report that they have seen or heard poetry on public transportation suggesting that programs like Poetry in Motion are effectively reaching large numbers of commuters.

More interesting than the overall rates is that while the potential audience is exposed at lower rates, they are still exposed to poetry. Ninety-nine percent of all adult readers, including those adults who said that they have never read or listened to poetry, indicate that they have been incidentally exposed to poetry in at least one unexpected place.

Respondents who reported seeing or hearing poetry in unexpected places were asked a series of follow-up questions about whether they had read or listened to the poem when they came across it, whether they had liked the poem, whether they had found it easy or difficult to understand, and whether reading or listening to that particular poem made them want to seek out more poetry. Eighty-one percent of the respondents who reported any incidental exposure to poetry said that they read or listened to the poem when they came across it. The poetry audience members (86 percent) are significantly more likely to read a poem when they happen across it than are members of the potential audience (67 percent).

Of the respondents who read or listened to a poem when they happen across one, 75 percent liked the poem, 79 percent found it easy to understand but only 33 percent said their incidental exposure prompted them to seek out additional poetry. In fact, incidental exposure seems to reinforce existing poetry behaviors. The poetry audience is significantly more likely to like a poem, find it easy to understand, and to feel encouraged to read more poetry as a result of having been incidentally exposed. Thirty-eight percent of the poetry audience reported that incidental exposure prompted them to seek out more poetry whereas only 12 percent of the potential audience felt similarly inspired.

Poetry often appears in books and magazines that are not devoted to poetry. We asked magazine and book readers about their experiences with poetry that happens to be in other materials that they read. Overall, 70 percent of magazine readers have seen poetry in the magazines that they read. Poetry audience members are significantly more likely (76 percent) to come across poetry in magazines than are either former poetry readers (59 percent) or non-poetry readers (38 percent). Not surprisingly, the poetry audience is more likely to say that they always or usually read poetry when they come across it in magazines.

Without influencing people's intent to read poetry in the future, incidental exposure encourages participation with poetry. Nearly all adult readers find poetry in unexpected places and most of them read it when they do happen across it. Poetry's role in private ceremonies, its use to mark special or solemn occasions, places poetry in front of large numbers of people. Placing poetry in other kinds of reading materials such as newspapers, magazines, and fiction or non-fiction books creates opportunities for current and potential audiences to engage with this art form. And, apparently when readers are given the opportunity to read poetry, when they do not have to deliberately seek it out on their own, most of them choose to read it.

If people are willing to read or listen to poetry when they happen across it, where are there other opportunities for incidental exposure? Commute time may present an ideal opportunity to expose people to poetry. Sixty percent of adult readers commute regularly for work or school. A slightly higher percentage of the poetry audience (62 percent) commutes than does the potential audience (54 percent).

LISTENING TO POETRY - RADIO, CDS, AND POETRY SLAMS

This study's goals included gathering information on the different manner in which respondents participate in poetry. One of the most compelling findings of this study is the extent to which African Americans prefer listening to reading poetry. Among African Americans in the study, 5% are current poetry readers, 13% are readers and listeners, but 27% are current poetry listeners. African Americans are significantly more likely to listen to poetry on CD or audiotapes, on the radio, in DVDs or movies, and at poetry slams. Africans Americans, from both current and potential audiences, use these mediums to engage poetry at twice the rate of non-Hispanic white respondents.

Interestingly, men are much more likely to listen to poetry than women. Forty eight percent of men report listening to poetry on the radio as compared to only 35 percent of women. Men are also more likely to listen to CDs and audiotapes as well as attend a poetry slam than women.

III PERCEPTION OF POETRY, POETS AND POETRY READERS

ATTITUDES ABOUT BENEFITS OF POETRY

At an abstract level, we found that current poetry audience members hold more positive views of poetry and less stereotyped impressions of poets and poetry readers. Current audience members, while recognizing that engaging with poetry can be effortful, also noted several positive benefits that can result from that effort – a deeper appreciation of the world around them, a better understanding of oneself and others, comfort in difficult times, and sheer enjoyment. Potential audience members shared these impressions of poetry's benefits but endorsed them at lower rates.

Current poetry audience members cite a variety of benefits that they derive from reading or listening to poetry that are clearly not shared by the potential audience. While potential audience members also identify a number of benefits, they do so much less frequently than do current members. Significant differences exist between current audience members who list the following as benefits of poetry at significantly higher rates than do potential audience members:

- Relaxation
- Entertainment/enjoyment
- Mind expanding and makes you think
- General understanding/enlightenment
- Helps you understand yourself
- Helps you understand others
- Provides solace and comfort

In one category potential audience members exceed the current members. In this category, 31% of potential audience members describe poetry as having "no benefits" compared to 9% of the current audience.

In addition to the personal benefits of poetry, our study explored respondents' perceptions of the social benefits of poetry. First, we asked all current and potential audience members their opinion about the amount of poetry being read today, and then asked a follow-up question of those respondents who said that they thought people should read more poetry. The follow-up question addressed the possible benefits that could result from increased readership. Overall, 64 percent of adult readers thought that in general, people should read more poetry. Current audience members are significantly more likely than potential members to hold this view. Nearly two-thirds of the current audience (72 percent) thinks that people should read more poetry compared to 45 percent of potential audience.

PERCEPTIONS OF POETRY, POETS AND POETRY

Poetry in America asked all respondents to listen to a series of statements about poetry and indicate whether they thought each statement was always, usually, sometimes or never true. These questions were intended to draw out people's top-of-mind reactions to poetry. Not surprisingly, the poetry audience is more likely to have positive perceptions of poetry than is the potential audience. On average, 90 percent of poetry's audience thought the positive statements were true compared to 62 percent of the potential audience. In most instances, the poetry audience endorsed statements like "poems help you appreciate the world around you" and "poems provide comfort at difficult times in your life".

Not surprisingly, the potential audience has more negative perceptions of poetry than do current audience members. The potential audience is significantly more likely to endorse each of the negative statements than were members of the poetry audience. One interesting conclusion is that a sizeable number of the current audience also endorsed each of the negative statements. More than half of the poetry audience felt that four of the five negative statements were true, with an overall average for the five statements of 55 percent. The two negative statements that the poetry audience members most frequently cited were "Figuring out a poem's meaning is difficult," and "Reading poetry is hard work," although no everyone in the poetry audience saw these attributes as negatives.

We asked all respondents a series of questions that tapped into their perceptions of poets and of poetry readers. These questions asked about poets' and poetry readers' physical characteristics, personality traits, and their status within the culture. In general, adult readers do not ascribe particular physical characteristics to poets or poetry readers. The majority of respondents indicated that both poets and poetry readers could be male or female, were of no particular age, and no particular race. However, when adult readers do ascribe physical characteristics to poets and poetry readers, they have very different perceptions of what these groups look like. Among those respondents who chose a particular physical characteristic to describe most poets, the image of poets that emerges is fairly stereotypical. They agree that poets are more likely to be old or middle-aged, white men. In comparison, the only physical characteristic that was attributed to poetry readers with significant frequency was gender. Respondents believe that poetry readers are more likely to be women.

Poets and poetry readers are thought to be similar on a number of social characteristics – both groups are considered more likely to be creative than logical, and more likely to be quiet than talkative. However, poets are considered significantly more likely to exhibit both of these traits. Poets also are significantly more likely to be thought of as loners than are poetry readers, whereas poetry readers are significantly more likely to be thought of as sociable.

In general, both poets and poetry readers are esteemed by readers. Both are more likely to be people whom adult readers would like to meet, and both are much more likely to be respected than disrespected. About two-thirds of our respondents thought that both poets and poetry readers are people who are generally respected; and, slightly more respondents would like to meet poets (70 percent) than would like to meet poetry readers (66 percent).

In general, we found that stereotypes of poets decrease as experience with poetry increases. We found significant differences between the current and potential audiences on six of the eight characteristics measured. Potential audience members are significantly more likely to say that poets are white men who are creative and loners. They are also significantly more likely to say that poets are people they would like to avoid. In comparison, the poetry audience is significantly more likely to say that poets are people they would like to meet.

IV OBSTACLES TO ENGAGEMENT WITH POETRY

What keeps people from reading poetry? For the potential poetry audience, it seems likely that their negative perceptions of poetry, poets, and poetry readers coupled with the few if any benefits they derive from reading poetry, constitute significant barriers to their participation. To help us understand the obstacles that keep people from engaging with poetry, we asked all former poetry readers, "What prevents you from reading poetry now?"

The most frequently cited barrier, "Don't like it/no interest," needs to be understood in the context of the potential audience's negative perceptions of poetry, reported earlier. More than 80 percent of former poetry readers found poetry difficult to understand, and more than 80 percent found poetry boring. Evidently, the main reason former poetry readers don't read poetry now is that they don't like it, and the most likely reasons that they don't like it are that they don't find in it the benefits that the poetry audiences cites. Despite their general lack of interest, less than half of the potential audience thinks that poetry is a waste of time, suggesting that at least some of their experiences with poetry were rewarding. The other barriers they reported, "no time" and "other interests," indicate that former readers feel they have little free time, and what little they have, they prefer to spend it pursuing other interests.

We also asked the poetry audience if they read poetry as much now as they have in the past. Fifty percent of the audience read poetry less frequently now than they used to, 38 percent read about the same amount, and 12 percent read poetry more frequently. Those respondents who read more or less frequently than they have in the past were asked about the factors that might underlie this change. Of those that could be, increased interest and more available free time topped the list. The most frequently cited reason for reading poetry less often now than in the past was shifting priorities, although lack of time also topped the list.

THE CLASSICS VERSUS CONTEMPORARY POETRY

We asked both the current and former poetry audiences about the type of poetry they first listened to or read – classics or contemporary. Fifty-five percent of both current and former poetry readers first read classic poetry. More than half of all the poetry audience reads or listens to contemporary poetry. About one-third of the current audience restricts their involvement to contemporary poetry, and about one quarter reads or listens to both contemporary poetry and the classics.

We examined the relationship between respondents' first exposure to poetry and their current choice for poetry. Those respondents who first read classic poetry are significantly more likely to read classics currently than they are to read contemporary poetry. Similarly, people who first read either contemporary poetry or some other kind of poetry are significantly more likely to read either contemporary poetry or some other type of poetry than they are to read classics. This data suggests that the nature of the first exposure to poetry is a strong predictor of one's choice of poetry in subsequent years.

V RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BROADENING THE AUDIENCE FOR POETRY

Poetry in America gathered information about people's experiences with poetry. The data on the characteristics of poetry's current audience, factors that distinguish poetry readers from others, barriers to poetry and perceptions of poetry (poets and poetry readers) suggest recommendations to broaden and deepen people's participation with poetry.

CHARACTERISTICS OF POETRY'S CURRENT AUDIENCE

Poetry's current audience consists of active, engaged adults who participate in a variety of leisure and social activities. The current poetry audience reads voraciously with poetry as one of many genres they enjoy. When we include those who listen to poetry and those incidentally exposed to poetry, we find that most adult readers also read poetry.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO PARTICIPATION IN POETRY

Poetry is a lifelong passion, beginning during a person's teenage years but often beginning in childhood. People in the poetry's current audience have parents and other family members who read poetry, nursery rhymes and Dr. Seuss books to them when they were young. People who remain poetry readers and listeners into adulthood studied poetry more extensively when they attended elementary and high school. They also write it, memorize and recite it, remembering poetry they memorized many years afterwards. A second factor is a family member, usually a parent, whom they connect with their burgeoning interest in poetry. Poetry readers may have studied poetry in school, but it is their family experiences which are more memorable. Third, people who continue to engage with poetry make a conscious decision to do so. Perhaps it is at this turning point, a person begins to self-identify as a poetry reader.

WHAT HINDERS PEOPLE FROM ENGAGING IN POETRY

People who don't currently read poetry usually say they simply don't like it because their experiences with it are limited and because they haven't found poetry that they like. They read nursery rhymes and Dr. Seuss books, but their in-school experiences were limited to classic poetry that may have been less accessible and relevant to them as teenagers. It seems likely that people's perceptions of poetry are the greatest barriers to participation. Few people are inclined to invest their free time in an activity that they think is effortful and unrewarding.

PEOPLE'S PERCEPTIONS OF POETRY, POETS AND POETRY READERS

Both the current and former poetry audiences recognize that figuring out a poem's meaning can be difficult. Where they seem to diverge is in their perceptions of the results of those efforts. People who choose to read poetry feel rewarded by their efforts. They gain an appreciation of the world around them, a connection to other people, comforted and gain insights into themselves. People who discontinue their involvement with poetry recognize these rewards but did not feel that they personally experienced them. Rather, they felt that they received no benefits from the effort they put into reading poetry and as a result it often felt irrelevant to their daily lives.

While stereotype of poets persist (they are quiet, creative, old, white men who tend to be loners), the perceptions persist most strongly among people who once read poetry but no longer do so. People who read poetry recognize that the population of poetry readers is diverse as well and tend to avoid stereotyping poetry readers.

STEPS TO BROADEN THE AUDIENCE FOR POETRY

1. Develop Programs for Parents. Parents are already reading poetry to their children. Nearly all parents read nursery rhymes and books like Dr. Seuss to their children; their children grow up and read these types of poetry to their own children. Many parents don't know what to read after Dr. Seuss. Developing a graduated series of poetry that parents can share with their children may be one successful strategy for involving a new generation with poetry.

2. Develop Programs for Teachers. After parents, teachers are most often cited as early influences, but they are more often cited by former poetry readers than by those who continue reading poetry into adulthood. Encouraging teachers to do more than have students read poetry seems to be particularly important. Teachers need help finding contemporary poetry that speaks to the issues teenagers face; they also need to appreciate that poems have a multitude of meanings. Many former poetry readers talk about the frustration they felt when called upon in school to tell the class what the poem meant; they recall the struggle to figure out a poem's meaning. By encouraging students to talk about what they got out of a poem, they are more likely to experience two of poetry's rewards – a better understanding of oneself and of others.

3. Help Libraries and Book Clubs Foster Participation. Libraries are untapped resources for promoting participation with poetry. Adult readers tend to be library cardholders, but few use their libraries for poetry. A large number of readers can be reached by partnering with libraries to develop and promote programs related to poetry. While few adult readers belong to book clubs, these groups are natural venues for reading and exploring poetry.

4. **Increase Poetry's Presence on the Internet.** Adult readers have greater access to the Internet than those in the general population. Few poetry readers turn to the Internet to access poetry or to find information about poetry events.   With increasing numbers of people using the Internet, it is becoming the source for everything, including poetry. Websites devoted exclusively to poetry will be visited by people who already are fairly deeply involved with poetry. Even if relatively few poetry users visit the website, poems are shared. People who would not identify themselves as a poetry reader receive poems via email or because someone copied them out for them. The Internet can deepen participation for current poetry users who will search for poetry, and their social networks will broaden participation, in turn. Poetry is already part of people's special and solemn occasions. Placing poetry at sites devoted to private ceremonies can help make people more aware of poetry's role in commemorating important events.

5. **Create New Opportunities for Incidental Exposure.** Creating more opportunities for incidental exposure will broaden participation. Adult readers will read poetry when it appears in magazines and books. Television and radio present opportunities for large numbers of people to listen to poetry. The idea is not to create programs specifically about poetry but to incorporate poetry into the programs that people are already listening to and watching, as the Foundation has recently done in cooperation with The News Hour. Many people listen to talk radio during their commute and this seems like a natural entry point for poetry.

6. **Challenge People's Perceptions.** The image of poetry readers that emerges from the *Poetry in America* data is one that can face down negative stereotypes. Poetry is not the purview of quiet, introspective women. Poetry's audience is in the throes of an identity crisis. There are many adult readers who simply do not self-identify as poetry readers.   The findings from *Poetry in America* ask those readers who think that they don't read poetry to think again. Readers are exposed to poetry in books and magazines. They encounter it in public places and at private events. More importantly, when readers come across poetry, they engage with it and, the data suggest, many of them may like it. As one poetry reader said, "good" poems are "like good chocolate, an explosion of flavor in your mouth."

7. **Evaluate All Programs.** New initiatives are put in place without plans for their evaluation. New initiatives that are born of the *Poetry in America* findings should be subject to rigorous evaluation.   The survey itself can be part of ongoing evaluation efforts by periodically taking another look at poetry's role in our culture.

15 APPENDICES

Appendix A: Summary Tables
Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of
Poetry Audience and Potential Audience

Percentage of Respondents in Demographic Categories			
	Poetry Audience	**Potential Audience**	**Total**
GENDER			
Male	38.0	42.8	39.2
Female*	62.0	57.2	60.8
RACE AND ETHNICITY			
African American**	12.2	6.3	10.7
White Hispanic	1.8	1.5	1.7
White Non-Hispanic*	72.1	78.7	73.7
Multi-Racial	4.5	4.2	4.4
Other	8.1	8.8	8.2
AGE			
18-24**	12.2	3.5	10.1
25-34	15.1	10.9	14.0
35-44	19.7	20.1	19.8
45-54	23.2	20.7	22.5
55-64**	13.3	20.5	15.1
65-74**	9.1	16.6	10.9
75 and Older	7.6	7.7	7.6
EDUCATION			
Less than High School	3.1	3.4	3.1
High School or GED	21.8	31.0	24.0
Some College, No Degree	30.8	29.0	30.4
Bachelor's Degree	23.4	24.2	23.6
Master's Degree or Higher**	20.8	12.3	18.7

* Significant at p < .05
** Significant at p < .01

Table 1 (Cont'd)

Percentage of Respondents in Demographic Categories			
	Poetry Audience	**Potential Audience**	**Total**
EMPLOYMENT STATUS			
Full-Time	53.6	49.3	52.5
Part-Time	15.0	13.4	14.6
Not Employed	31.4	37.4	32.8
MARITAL STATUS			
Never Married*	24.2	11.7	21.2
Married*	53.9	70.2	57.9
Separated or Divorced	13.0	9.6	12.2
Widowed	7.4	7.7	7.5
INCOME			
<10k	5.0	5.7	5.1
10-25k	12.3	8.8	11.4
25-50k	23.1	22.7	23.0
50-75k	18.0	23.4	19.3
75-100k	13.7	11.1	13.1
100k+	15.6	14.8	15.4
Not Reported	12.0	13.0	12.7

Table 2: Average Hours of Leisure and Average Hours Worked per Week

Leisure and Work Hours by Demographic Characteristics		Average Number of Leisure Hours per Week	Average Number of Hours Worked per Week
Age Range			
	18-24	52.4	28.9
	24-34	32.5	40.9
	34-44	29.1	43.4
	45-54	33.0	42.4
	55-64	40.7	28.2
	65-74	44.8	17.0
	75+	47.7	6.6
Gender			
	Male	40.4	39.7
	Female	35.7	30.6
Race			
	Black	40.7	32.9
	White	37.5	31.2
	Multi-Racial	60.7	43.0
	Other	33.4	38.9
Marital Status			
	Never Married	44.2	35.0
	Married	33.2	36.1
	Separated or Divorced	43.8	35.0
	Widowed	42.9	13.4
Education			
	Less than High School	51.6	21.0
	High School	41.6	28.9
	Some College	39.0	33.4
	Bachelor's Degree	32.1	35.2
	Master's Degree or Higher	34.0	39.3
Employment Status			
	Full Time	31.1	48.7
	Part Time	39.9	28.9
	Not Employed	47.3	11.0
Income			
	< $10,000	45.0	16.9
	$10,000 - 25,000	46.4	28.0
	$25,000 - 50,000	39.0	32.6
	$50,000 - 75,000	32.8	36.7
	$75,000 - 100,000	36.3	39.0
	$100,000+	31.9	40.0
Strata			
	Poetry Audience	39.8	34.9
	Potential Audience	35.2	31.6
Total		**37.6**	**33.4**

Table 3: Participation Rates in Leisure Activities by Poetry Audience and
Potential Audience

| Poetry Audience and Potential Audiences' Leisure Pursuits			
	Strata		
Activity	**Poetry Audience**	**Potential Audience**	**Total**
Read**	97.2	91.6	95.8
Listen to music**	95.8	85.6	93.3
Watch Television*	86.7	92.6	88.2
Watch Movies	86.5	82.6	85.5
Play sports or exercise	76.4	73.0	75.6
Use Internet or play computer games**	74.4	63.7	71.8
Listen to talk radio	67.3	62.2	66.1
Attend Cultural Events**	64.8	47.1	60.5
Volunteer**	56.3	40.2	52.3
Write**	57.1	33.9	51.4
Draw, paint, craft**	44.7	30.8	41.3
Play instrument or sing**	35.1	17.3	30.7

Figure 1: Poetry Readership at Three Life Stages
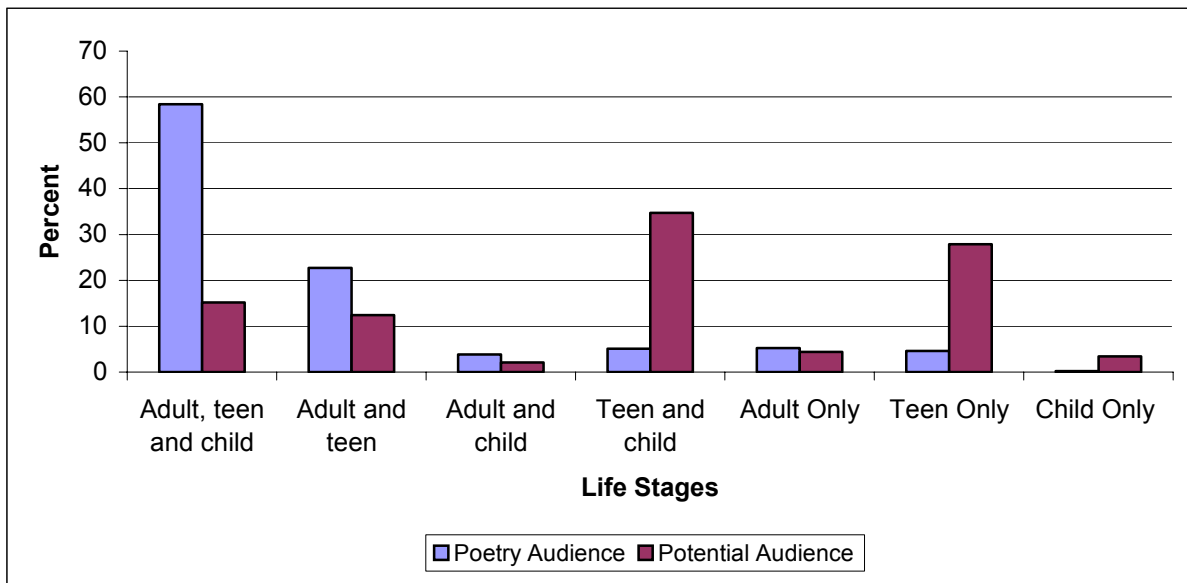
Table 4: Producers of Poetry by Respondent Types

Percentage of Poetry Audience and Potential Audience who Write and Perform Poetry					
	Poetry Audience			Potential Audience	
	Current Readers	Current Listeners	Current Readers & Listeners	Former Poetry Readers	Non-Poetry Readers
Wrote poetry as an adult*	37.2	12.2	55.8	0.1	0.03
Performed poetry in public	24.4	27.3	29.3	4.8	0

* Significant at p < .05

Note: Percentages for those who performed their poetry in public are a proportion of those who have written poetry.

Table 5: Recency with Which Adults Have Written Poetry

Percentage of Respondents who Wrote Poetry as Adults			
	Poetry Audience	Potential Audience	Total
Within the last year	53.6	22.7	51.8
Between 1 and 5 years ago	26.2	13.6	25.5
Between 6 and 10 years ago	9.2	9.1	9.2
10 or more years ago	11.0	54.5	13.6

Table 6: Poetry Audience and Potential Audiences' Early Exposure to Poetry

Percentage of Respondents with Early Exposure to Poetry			
	Poetry Audience	Potential Audience	Total
Had nursery rhymes or books like Dr. Seuss read to them**	80.2	67.5	77.1
Had other types of poetry read to them**	51.5	24.6	44.9

** Significant at p < .01

Table 7: Parents' Reading of Poetry to Their Children

Percentage of Reading Poetry to Their Children			
	Poetry Audience	Potential Audience	Total
Read nursery rhymes or books like Dr. Seuss to their children**	95.4	88.3	93.4
Read other types of poetry to their children**	70.6	29.0	58.9

** Significant at p < .01

Figure 2: Ratings of In- and Out-of-School Experiences with Poetry

Figure 2: Ratings of In- and Out-of-School Experiences with Poetry
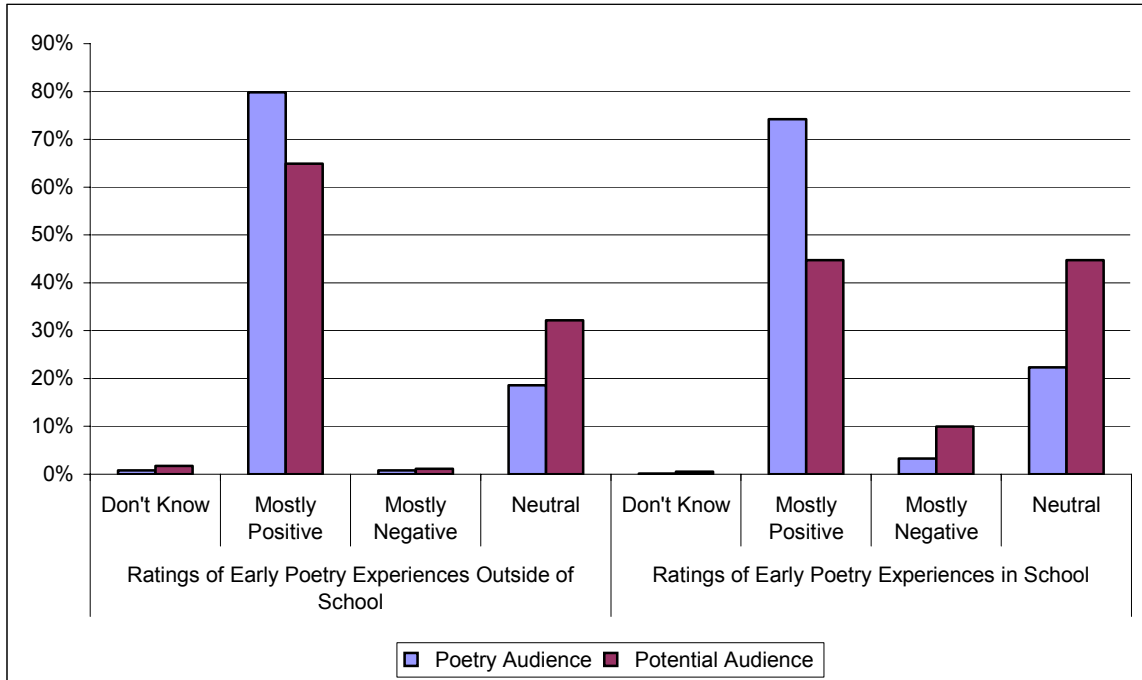
Table 8: In-School Experiences with Poetry

Percentage of Respondents with In-School Experience by Grade Level			
	Poetry Audience	Potential Audience	Total
Elementary School**	57.5	46.7	55.1
Middle School or Junior High School**	63.1	53.3	60.9
High School**	89.0	79.1	86.8
College**	53.6	33.0	49.0

** Significant at $p < .01$

Table 9: Educational Activities Associated with Studying Poetry in School

Percentage of Respondents who Participated in Poetry-Related Educational Activities			
	Poetry Audience	Potential Audience	Total
Read a poem**	98.4	92.3	97.1
Memorized a poem**	80.2	63.2	76.4
Recited a poem**	85.7	69.2	82.0
Wrote a poem**	82.9	66.5	79.2

** Significant at $p < .01$

Table 10: Persons Associated with Early Experiences with Poetry

Percentage of Respondents who Named an Influential Person			
	Poetry Audience	Potential Audience	Total
Parent	42.0	22.5	39.3
One specific teacher	33.6	49.3	35.9
Multiple teachers	23.5	26.8	24.0
Relative	18.2	12.7	17.4
Friend	11.8	9.9	11.5
Grandparent	10.6	2.8	9.4
One specific poet	6.5	1.4	5.7

Note: Percentages shown are of those respondents who associate a person with their early experiences with poetry.

Table 11: Events Associated with Early Experiences with Poetry

Percentage of Respondents who Named an Influential Event			
	Poetry Audience	Potential Audience	Total
Other event	35.1	40.6	35.7
Listening to/having poetry read	26.4	21.9	25.6
School	24.7	25.0	24.7
Reading a specific poem	20.9	15.6	20.4
Memorizing a specific poem	17.9	9.7	17.1
Writing a specific poem	16.9	3.1	15.5

Note: Percentages shown are of those respondents who associate an event with their early experiences with poetry.

Table 12: Library Use

Percentage of Respondents Using the Library for Poetry			
	Poetry Audience	Potential Audience	Total
Do you currently have a library card?**	72.6	61.5	71.8
Have you borrowed books of poetry from or read poetry at the library?	36.3	n/a	36.3
Have you borrowed from or listened to CDs, tapes or videos of poetry at the library?	11.4	n/a	11.4
Have you attended a library program related to poetry?	7.1	0.5	5.7

** Significant at p < .01.

Table 13: Internet Use by Poetry Audience and Potential Audience

Percentage of Respondents Using the Internet for Poetry			
	Poetry Audience	Potential Audience	Total
Do you have access to the Internet?	81.3	78.8	80.7
Have you used the Internet to find, read, or listen to poetry?[1]**	36.5	4.8	29.6
Have you used the Internet to find information about poetry events?**	13.6	1.2	10.9

** Significant at p < .01.

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[1] This question and the following one about using the Internet to find information about poetry events were only asked of current and former poetry users who reported having access to the Internet.

Table 14: Poetry Purchases in the Last Five Years

Percentage of Respondents Purchasing Poetry			
	Poetry Audience	Potential Audience	Total
Have you purchased books of poetry or magazines of poetry either for yourself or someone else?**	48.0	12.3	39.3
Have you purchased CDs, tapes or videos of poetry, either for yourself or someone else?**	14.8	2.8	11.9

** Significant at $p < .01$.

Table 15: For Whom Did People Purchase Poetry

Percentage of Respondents Purchasing Poetry for Themselves, Someone Else, or Both				
		Poetry Audience	Potential Audience	Total
Books or magazines of poetry?**	*Yourself*	22.3	5.5	21.0
	Someone else	37.7	83.5	41.2
	Both	40.0	11.0	37.8
CDs, tapes or videos of poetry?*	*Yourself*	25.1	0.0	23.7
	Someone else	34.9	85.7	37.9
	Both	40.0	14.3	38.5

* Significant at $p < .05$

Table 16: The Social Exchange of Poetry

	Poetry Audience	Potential Audience	Total
Have you lent one of your own books of poetry to a friend, relative or co-worker?**	31.1	2.7	25.0
Has anyone - either a friend, relative or co-worker - given you a book of poetry?**	39.7	7.4	32.8
Have you shared poems with friends, relatives or co-workers?**[2]	51.5	22.5	45.3
Has anyone shared poems with you?**	72.8	39.2	65.6

* Significant at $p <.01$.

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[2] The introduction to the questions about sharing poems stated, "*Sometimes people share poems by emailing them, copying them, or writing them out.*"

Table 17: Incidental Exposure to Poetry

Percentage of Respondents Reporting Incidental Exposure			
	Poetry Audience	Potential Audience	Total
In a newspaper**	71.3	53.4	67.0
On a billboard**	45.3	30.6	41.7
On public transportation**	32.5	13.4	27.8
At a public event**	49.0	30.2	44.4
At a private ceremony**	92.1	81.0	89.4
In some other place**	27.8	9.7	23.4

*Significant at p <.05
** Significant at p <.01

Table 18: Reactions to Poems in Unexpected Places

Percentage of Poetry Audience and Potential Audience Who Engage with Poetry when They Are Incidentally Exposed to It			
	Poetry Audience	Potential Audience	Total
Read or listened to the poem**	85.7	66.6	81.6
Liked the poem**	77.0	68.0	75.3
Found the poem easy to understand*	80.2	73.0	78.8
Wanted to read more poetry as a result**	37.6	12.2	32.7

* Significant at p < .05
** Significant at p < .01

Table 19: Reactions to Poetry in Non-Poetry Magazines

Percentage of Magazine Readers who Read Poetry When They Find It in Magazines				
	Poetry Audience	Potential Audience: Former Poetry Readers	Potential Audience: Non-Poetry Readers	Total
Always read the poems	24.6	7.1	15.6	21.5
Usually read the poems	30.2	17.9	0.0	27.6
Sometimes read the poems	42.6	65.2	59.4	46.4
Never read the poems	2.6	9.8	25.0	4.1

Table 20: Reactions to Poetry in Non-Poetry Books

Percentage of Book Readers who Read Poetry When They Find It in Books				
	Poetry Audience	Potential Audience: Former Poetry Readers	Potential Audience: Non-Poetry Readers	Total
Always read the poems	50.9	41.3	36.0	49.1
Usually read the poems	26.2	20.0	4.0	24.9
Sometimes read the poems	22.6	33.2	56.0	24.5
Never read the poems	0.3	5.5	4.0	1.1

Table 21: Detailed Categories of Personal Benefits by Strata

Percentage of Poetry Audience and Potential Audience (Former Poetry Readers Only) Citing Benefits of Poetry			
	Poetry Audience	Potential Audience: Former Poetry Readers	Total
Relaxation*	25.6	8.0	21.3
Entertainment/Enjoyment*	23.6	12.7	20.9
Mind expanding and makes you think*	22.5	7.2	18.8
General understanding/Enlightenment*	11.5	3.6	9.6
Helps you understand others*	10.6	4.0	9.0
Provides solace and comfort*	11.3	4.0	9.0
Inspiration	9.1	4.0	7.8
Emotional release	5.6	4.0	5.2
Helps you understand yourself*	5.6	1.6	4.6
Education	4.0	5.2	4.3
Appreciation of language	4.7	2.8	4.2
Spiritual connection	1.7	0.8	1.5
Some other benefit	8.9	4.8	7.9
No benefits*	9.2	31.6	14.7

* Significant at $p < .05$

Table 22: Types of Poetry First Read by Poetry Audience and Potential Audience (Former Readers Only)

Percentage of Respondents Who First Read Classic or Contemporary Poetry			
	Poetry Audience	Potential Audience (Former Readers Only)	Total
Classics	55.4	53.8	55.0
Contemporary	46.9	37.1	44.8
Something else	11.3	10.5	11.1

Table 23: Positive Perceptions of Poetry by Strata

Percentage of Poetry Audience and Potential Audience Endorsing Positive Statements		
	Poetry Audience	Potential Audience
Poems help you appreciate the world around you.**	95.1	70.7
Poems make you laugh.**	94.7	80.5
Poems help you understand other people.**	90.4	58.7
Poems provide comfort at difficult times of your life.**	88.3	56.4
Poetry keeps your mind sharp.**	86.8	60.4
Poems help you understand yourself.**	81.8	42.6
Average for six positive statements	89.5	61.6

** Significant at $p < .01$.

Table 24: Negative Perceptions of Poetry by Strata

Percentage of Poetry Audience and Potential Audience Endorsing Negative Statements		
	Poetry Audience	Potential Audience
Figuring out a poem's meaning is difficult for you.*	78.7	84.4
Reading poetry is boring.**	56.4	81.2
Poems are irrelevant to your daily life.**	53.8	76.4
Reading poetry is hard work.*	60.8	67.8
Reading poetry is a waste of time.**	25.9	48.6
Average for five negative statements	55.1	71.7

* Significant at p < .05
** Significant at p < .01

Table 25: Perceptions of Poets by Poetry Audience and Potential Audience

Percentage of Poetry Audience and Potential Audience Endorsing Characteristics of Poets		
	Poetry Audience	Potential Audience
GENDER		
Men**	27.5	41.6
Women	13.7	15.1
Both/Neither**	57.6	40.7
AGE		
Old	12.2	17.8
Middle-aged	18.0	17.8
Young	3.6	3.0
No particular age	65.7	60.7
RACE		
White*	16.0	23.4
Black	0.5	0.3
No particular race	82.5	74.6
INTELLECTUAL STYLE		
Logical	5.6	4.6
Creative**	69.9	78.4
Both/Neither**	23.6	14.4
GARRULOUSNESS		
Talkative	15.3	20.7
Quiet	52.2	59.7
Both/Neither**	31.2	17.0
EXTRAVERSION		
Sociable	24.0	24.7
Loner**	39.1	52.9
Both/Neither**	35.6	20.6
CULTURAL STATUS		
Meet**	75.1	55.7
Avoid**	5.2	18.0
Both/Neither	18.2	20.4
Respect	73.6	80.6
Disrespect	5.0	4.1
Both/Neither	19.5	13.3

* Significant at p < .05
** Significant at p < .01

Table 26: Perceptions of Poetry Readers by Poetry Audience and Potential Audience

Percentage of Poetry Audience and Potential Audience Endorsing Characteristics of Poetry Readers		
	Poetry Audience	Potential Audience
GENDER		
Men	6.8	9.0
Women	43.7	50.6
Both/Neither**	48.4	37.3
AGE		
Old	4.3	6.1
Middle-aged	13.0	11.3
Young	5.9	5.5
No particular age	82.4	82.2
RACE		
White	6.3	10.4
Black	0.5	0.1
No particular race	92.5	88.1
INTELLECTUAL STYLE		
Logical	9.9	10.0
Creative**	55.4	67.5
Both/Neither**	33.9	21.0
GARRULOUSNESS		
Talkative	22.9	24.7
Quiet**	32.8	45.2
Both/Neither**	43.0	28.3
EXTRAVERSION		
Sociable	34.3	37.9
Loner**	19.6	30.1
Both/Neither**	44.7	28.3
CULTURAL STATUS		
Meet**	69.0	57.9
Avoid**	5.3	15.8
Both/Neither	24.0	22.9
Respect*	71.1	79.4
Disrespect	3.2	1.5
Both/Neither**	24.7	17.3

* Significant at p < .05
** Significant at p < .01

Appendix B: Favorite Poems

TITLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
THE RAVEN	13	6.2%
FOOTPRINTS	10	4.7%
TREES	9	4.3%
STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING	8	3.8%
THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED	7	3.3%
HOW DO I LOVE THEE	6	2.8%
THE RHYME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER	6	2.8%
THE CREMATION OF SAM MCGEE	5	2.4%
THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH	5	2.4%
ANNABELLE LEE	4	1.9%
IF	4	1.9%
THE ROAD NOT TAKEN	4	1.9%
PHENOMENAL WOMAN	3	1.4%
THE HIGHWAYMAN	3	1.4%
TIGER TIGER BURNING BRIGHT	3	1.4%
CASEY AT THE BAT	2	0.9%
DO NOT GO GENTLE INTO THAT GOOD NIGHT	2	0.9%
HIAWATHA	2	0.9%
I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS	2	0.9%
INVICTUS	2	0.9%
JABBERWOCKY	2	0.9%
ODE TO A GRECIAN URN	2	0.9%
SARAH CYNTHIA SYLVIA STOUT	2	0.9%
THE CHILDREN'S HOUR	2	0.9%
THE HOUSE BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD	2	0.9%
WINTER	2	0.9%

TITLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
A BROUGHAM OF ADAM	1	0.5%
A WORKER READS HISTORY	1	0.5%
ALLIGATOR PIE	1	0.5%
APPLE TREE DREAMS	1	0.5%
BEAR AND THERE	1	0.5%
BLACK SHOE	1	0.5%
BLOOD OF THE ROSE	1	0.5%
CHARLES HAROLD PILGRIMAGE	1	0.5%
CLOUDS	1	0.5%
COTTON CANDY ON A RAINY DAY	1	0.5%
DADDY	1	0.5%
DON'T STAND BY MY GRAVE AND WEEP	1	0.5%
EPHRAIM'S POEMS	1	0.5%
GENERATION WEBSITE	1	0.5%
GOD IS TODAY	1	0.5%
GOD'S PROTECTION	1	0.5%
HALF HANGED MARY	1	0.5%
HEY DIDDLE DIDDLE	1	0.5%
HOW I WALK	1	0.5%
HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO UP IN THE AIR	1	0.5%
HUMPTY DUMPTY	1	0.5%
I AM AN ISLAND	1	0.5%
I HEAR AMERICA SINGING	1	0.5%
I SAID A PRAYER FOR YOU TO DAY	1	0.5%
I SING THE BODY ELECTRIC	1	0.5%
I TAKE MASTER CARD -CHARGE YOUR LOVE TO ME	1	0.5%
I WILL	1	0.5%

TITLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
IF ONLY	1	0.5%
I'M BEING EATEN BY A BOA CONSTRICTOR	1	0.5%
I'M SPENDING CHRISTMAS WITH JESUS CHRIST THIS YEAR	1	0.5%
IN FLANDERS FIELDS	1	0.5%
IN THE VALLEY I GROW	1	0.5%
INTIMATION OF MORTALITY	1	0.5%
JASON AND MEDEA	1	0.5%
JUDGE TENDERLY ME	1	0.5%
L'ENNVOI	1	0.5%
MAN & A WOMEN	1	0.5%
MISPLACED	1	0.5%
MY BLUE CAR	1	0.5%
MY POOR DOG STRAY	1	0.5%
NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS	1	0.5%
NO	1	0.5%
NOTHING GOLD CAN STAY	1	0.5%
OH CAPTAIN MY CAPTAIN	1	0.5%
ONCE I HAVE NEVER TRAVELED	1	0.5%
ONE	1	0.5%
ONE PERFECT ROSE	1	0.5%
OVER THE HILL TO THE POOR HOUSE	1	0.5%
PAUL REVERE'S RIDE	1	0.5%
RELUCTANT	1	0.5%
RICHARD COREY	1	0.5%
RIDE A COCK HORSE	1	0.5%
ROSES ARE RED VIOLETS ARE BLUE	1	0.5%
SELF-PITY	1	0.5%

TITLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
SONNETS	1	0.5%
STAR STRUCK LOVERS	1	0.5%
STILL I RISE	1	0.5%
TABLEAU	1	0.5%
TALE OF TWO HEARTS	1	0.5%
THE BALL POEM	1	0.5%
THE BIRD THAT FLIES	1	0.5%
THE BLOWING OF THE TREES	1	0.5%
THE COLD WITHIN	1	0.5%
THE GIVING TREE	1	0.5%
THE GOOPS	1	0.5%
THE GRINCH THAT STOLE CHRISTMAS	1	0.5%
THE ILLIAD	1	0.5%
THE KISS	1	0.5%
THE LADY OF CHAILLOT	1	0.5%
THE LAMENT	1	0.5%
THE LION AND THE GLOVES	1	0.5%
THE LOVE OF MY CHILDREN	1	0.5%
THE PANTHER	1	0.5%
THE PRINCE IN THE SAND	1	0.5%
THE PROPHET	1	0.5%
THE PUFFINS	1	0.5%
THE RAINBOW	1	0.5%
THE RED WHEELBARROW	1	0.5%
THE SLING	1	0.5%
THE SPECTRUM OF LOVE	1	0.5%
THE TELLTALE HEART	1	0.5%

TITLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
THE TOLLING OF THE BELLS	1	0.5%
THE VAMPIRE	1	0.5%
THE WALNUT TREE	1	0.5%
THE WRECK OF THE HESPERUS	1	0.5%
THERE WAS AN OLD WOMAN LIVED UNDER A HILL	1	0.5%
TIL I RISE	1	0.5%
TO AN ATHLETE DYING YOUNG	1	0.5%
TO HIS COY MISTRESS	1	0.5%
TOULOUSE	1	0.5%
TRAVEL	1	0.5%
TWO	1	0.5%
UNDER THE VILLAGE CHESTNUT TREE	1	0.5%
UNDONE	1	0.5%
WALDEN'S POND	1	0.5%
WE ARE OF TWO WORLDS	1	0.5%
WHEN THOU PASSES THROUGH	1	0.5%
WHEN YOU WHERE OLD	1	0.5%
WIND THROUGH MY HAIR	1	0.5%