

2002

Something to Have at Heart: Another Look at Memorization

Gina Briefs-Elgin
New Mexico Highlands University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://trace.tennessee.edu/jaepl>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#), [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), [Curriculum and Social Inquiry Commons](#), [Disability and Equity in Education Commons](#), [Educational Methods Commons](#), [Educational Psychology Commons](#), [English Language and Literature Commons](#), [Instructional Media Design Commons](#), [Liberal Studies Commons](#), [Other Education Commons](#), [Special Education and Teaching Commons](#), and the [Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Briefs-Elgin, Gina (2002) "Something to Have at Heart: Another Look at Memorization," *The Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning*: Vol. 8 , Article 4.

<https://doi.org/10.7290/jaepl8by8w>

Available at: <https://trace.tennessee.edu/jaepl/vol8/iss1/4>

This article is brought to you freely and openly by Volunteer, Open-access, Library-hosted Journals (VOL Journals), published in partnership with The University of Tennessee (UT) University Libraries. This article has been accepted for inclusion in The Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning by an authorized editor. For more information, please visit <https://trace.tennessee.edu/jaepl>.

Something to Have at Heart: Another Look at Memorization

Cover Page Footnote

Gina Briefs-Elgin teaches composition and creative nonfiction as an associate professor of English at New Mexico Highlands University in Las Vegas, New Mexico. Her research focuses on the intersections of writing and service.

Something to Have at Heart: Another Look at Memorization¹

Gina Briefs-Elgin

"That's what misery is / Nothing to have at heart"

—Wallace Stevens

“**T**hrowing the baby out with the bathwater”—when I was little, I loved to hear my parents use this comic metaphor. Forty years later, thinking about the lost practice of “learning by heart,” this expression comes back to me: as educators, we threw the baby out with the bathwater. I’d like to trace memorization’s venerable—and sometimes ludicrous—history in education, recall its fall from academic favor, explore the ways it can enrich our students’ relationships with words and books, and empower their personal lives, and encourage its return to our classrooms. Memorization was vital to our pre-literate ancestors, the only reliable way they could keep track of and pass down to their children any kind of knowledge. What wasn’t learned verbatim might be forgotten or perhaps fatally misremembered, so, as Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi explains, “Lists of edible herbs and fruits, health tips, rules of behavior, patterns of inheritance, laws, geographical knowledge, rudiments of technology, and pearls of wisdom were all bundled into easily remembered sayings or verse” (*Flow* 121). After societies became literate, memorization continued to play a central role in education. In the western world, well into the beginning of the twentieth century, memorization of the Greek and Roman epics, of poetry, and of celebrated prose passages formed an important part of a student’s work.

Traditional religious education has always involved memorization, even among those religions which so venerate their scriptures as *written* words that they are called “People of the Book”: Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Memorization was a central practice in the education of Jewish boys. Teacher: “Would you first like to recite something from the Torah?” Child: “Of course, that is what I was created for” (Brumberg 92). In the Hasidic *yeshivas*, the tradition of

Gina Briefs-Elgin teaches composition and creative nonfiction as an associate professor of English at New Mexico Highlands University in Las Vegas, New Mexico. Her research focuses on the intersections of writing and service.

¹ The genesis of this paper was my presentation “The Uses of Memory” at the 1995 College Reading and Learning Association Conference.

learning by heart continues: “You see them studying, usually in pairs, the great tomes of the Talmud spread before them on desks or tables. Rarely do they use a pencil while studying, instead storing in their minds endless passages of Jewish law and tradition” (Arden 294).

Memorization of Biblical material was once an important feature of American education. Vignettes from scripture were learned by heart to enliven the alphabet. From *The New England Primer*, first published around 1690 and used for the next two hundred years, students learning their W’s would memorize “Whales in the Sea / God’s Voice obey,” and their Z’s, “Zacheus he / Did climb the Tree / His Lord to see.” Even in a history class, students might be expected to respond to their names with a perfectly recited Bible verse. And, of course, until recently, parochial schoolchildren spent hours every week memorizing scripture, prayers, and the answers to catechism questions. Even today, a search of *memorization* reveals dozens of Christian educational web sites dedicated to the memorization of scripture.

Daniel Wagner and Abdelhamid Lotfi note that traditional Islamic education is often referred to by “a more specific term, ‘Qur’anic’ education or schooling, because many students spend a great deal or all of their time learning the Qur’an” (238). An extreme example of learning sacred texts by heart can be seen in Muslims of certain non-Arab tribes who do not understand Arabic but who, through repetition, memorize the entire Qur’an in this sacred language of Islam (Harmouch). This first stage of learning the sacred text by heart is then followed by exploration into the meaning of the memorized words and verses.

But it wasn’t just religious educators who stressed—and in some cases, still stress—memorization. *Teaching Literature in the Grammar Grades and High School*, an education textbook by Emma Miller Bolenius published in 1915 under the aegis of Harvard University, lists the materials students should memorize: hymns, patriotic lyrics, folk-songs, poems set to music, nature lyrics—to be divided under three heads, autumn, winter, and spring—and “character-building poems” (“children’s minds are more open than you may suspect to the influence of big ideas. Store their growing minds, then, with bits of philosophy on life, which will act as safeguards long after you are forgotten” [66]). “It is amazing,” Bolenius writes, “how much good literature can be stowed away in young minds if the teacher goes about it systematically” (62).

The many references to memorization in children’s classics remind us how much educators of earlier times respected learning by heart as a pedagogical tool. *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* reveal the importance of memorization in a Victorian child’s education and parody the excesses that helped lead to its decline.

Stand up and repeat “*Tis the voice of the sluggard*,” said the Gryphon.

“How the creatures order one about, and make one repeat lessons!” thought Alice. “I might just as well be at school at once.” (100)

Victorian schoolchildren grew up to be adults who delighted in learning by heart and reciting. In several scenes, patient Alice has recitations inflicted on her. This exchange occurs when she approaches Tweedledum and Tweedledee to ask directions out of the wood:

“You like poetry?”

“Ye-es, pretty well—*some* poetry,” Alice said doubtfully. “Would you tell me which road leads out of the wood?”

“What shall I repeat to her?” said Tweedledee looking round at Tweedledum with great solemn eyes, and not noticing Alice’s question.

“‘The Walrus and the Carpenter’ is the longest,” Tweedledum replied, giving his brother an affectionate hug. (161)

Nor can Alice escape Humpty Dumpty’s recitation:

“I can repeat poetry as well as other folk, if it comes to that”

“Oh, it needn’t come to that!” Alice hastily said, hoping to keep him from beginning.

“The piece I’m going to repeat,” he went on without noticing her remark, “was written entirely for your amusement.” (191)

Later, the avuncular White Knight imposes lines on her.

“You are sad,” the Knight said in an anxious tone: “let me sing you a song to comfort you.”

“Is it very long?” Alice asked, for she had heard a good deal of poetry that day.

“It’s long,” said the Knight, “but it’s very, *very* beautiful.” (213–14)

Since the second half of the twentieth century, memorization has almost disappeared from mainstream American classrooms and lives. Edward Casey speaks powerfully about the decline in prestige of learning by heart: “Memorizing, once a standard pedagogical tool [. . .] is no longer emphasized in the early years of education. True, children are still occasionally required to memorize a poem or a brief prose passage, but this serves more as gesture than substance” (6). There are a number of reasons for this loss, some emerging from latter twentieth-century educational theory, some having to do with attitudes and lifestyles. Five seem to me most important: 1. the discouraging research on the “exercise theory” of memory; 2. the ludicrous excesses of rote learning; 3. the pressure from industry and the space race for more technologically based education; 4. the cultural disillusionment that derided the staples of the Victorian learning-by-heart canon; 5. the information explosion accelerated by the computer revolution.

The first reason was a discovery about the way memory works, or, rather, doesn’t work. As Morton M. Hunt notes, since ancient times people have visual-

ized the memory as a sort of muscle and considered learning by heart as a way to exercise that muscle:

Children were [. . .] made to memorize masses of material—poems, Shakespearean soliloquies [. . .] dates of wars and treaties—because it was thought that the effort spent in memorizing these materials would make the children better able to remember any and all other kinds of subject matter. The exercise theory of memory was taken on faith and not subjected to scientific test until less than a century ago. It was William James, America's first psychologist, who, using himself as a subject, first tried measuring the power of memory before and after a period of exercise to see if, indeed, there were any change. (93-94)

James timed himself memorizing 158 lines of a Victor Hugo poem. Then he memorized the first book of *Paradise Lost*, expecting in so doing to strengthen his powers of memorization. But when he timed himself memorizing another 158 lines of Hugo, he discovered that the opposite had occurred: "Exercise, he concluded, hadn't increased the power of his memory, but diminished it, at least temporarily" (94). Of course, strengthening the memory "muscle" was not the only reason educators had promoted learning by heart, but with this reason debunked, memorization lost some of its pedagogical gloss.

Excesses are a second reason for memorization's eclipse. A glimpse into a New York City school at the turn of the last century helps explain the revolt against "learning by rote":

The chief maxim was "Save the minutes." The method was to see how the greatest number of answers could be given in the smallest number of minutes. [. . .]

A student was taught to pop up and say quickly and loudly, "A note is a sign representing to the eye the length or duration of time." As he was sitting down, the next child arose for a similar performance. (Wirth 33)

As the twentieth century progressed, a third reason for the decline in memorization emerged. Employers in American industry increasingly demanded that employees have hands-on understanding of process and critical thinking skills rather than heads full of memorized facts. Russia's successful launch of Sputnik in 1957 further spurred educational change: if America was to win the technological race, the focus must be not on memorizing facts but on learning how to apply them. Later twentieth-century studies abound discrediting learning by heart as stultifying to critical thinking, some going to great lengths in that cause. Abdelhamid Lotfi and Daniel Wagner offer the examples of researchers who attempted to discredit memorization of texts by investigating Qur'anic education in Morocco.

I believe a fourth reason memorization fell out of favor in the latter part of the twentieth century had to do with contemporary attitudes and world views. Much of what used to be memorized in the great Victorian age of learning by

heart seemed naively idealistic in an era deeply suspicious of heroes and of heroic sentiment. It wasn't possible for us to take seriously poems like Kipling's "If," Longfellow's "Excelsior," Henley's "Invictus"—staples of the classroom earlier in the century—not because there was anything wrong with them in and of themselves (we could use more "If" today), but because these poems grew out of the great Victorian belief in the perfectibility of humankind. This belief crashed in what the poet Elizabeth Bishop once described as "our worst century so far"—a century defined by world war, concentration camp, atomic bomb, and the conflict in Vietnam.

The fifth reason is that the computer revolution has made it unnecessary for us to memorize all practical information—and the information explosion has made it impossible. It's an old maxim that one can either know something or know where to find it out. A millennium ago, educated people could carry a good part of their world's knowledge around in their heads. Today with the explosion of knowledge, we must, of necessity, train our students to be the second kind of knowers. Edward Casey notes that memory was considered by the Greeks to be the Mother of the Muses (12, 13). Now, he writes, "Where once Mnemosyne was a venerated goddess, we have turned over responsibility for remembering to the cult of the computers" (2).

Let's grant, for argument's sake, that learning by heart doesn't strengthen the memory muscle, that it can be (like anything else) subject to absurd excess, that it doesn't build industry or win the space race, that it once associated itself with a literature that may now seem naively idealistic, that it can't match computers for storing facts. Done. We've looked its failings in the face.

But now I'd like to argue that these shortcomings are only *half* the story and that it's time to take another look at the ancient practice we have dismissed from our classrooms and lives. I'd like to argue that to learn things by heart is a deeply rooted human impulse for good reasons and that by teaching our students this time-honored skill, we will bestow on them a number of important pedagogical and psychological advantages.

That we humans like to keep valued texts near at hand, not only in their gist, but also in their exact wording is obvious from architecture, interior design, and ephemera. We put inscriptions on public buildings, samplers on cabin walls, morals and maxims on Arts and Crafts Movement mantels and wallpapers (as design writer Julie Iovine predicted a decade ago, "writing on the wall" has become popular again in architecture and interior design), stickers on bumpers, posters on office walls.

Further, as t-shirts, tattoos, medals, medicine pouches, amulets, scapulars, and Roxane's blood-stained letter from Cyrano testify, we want to get the words actually onto our bodies, over our life pump, our hearts. But of course the ultimate closeness of literal words is not *over* the heart but where they can never be taken or torn or worn away: *in* the heart, memorized (that's where Cyrano carries the letter). In English we use the expression *learn by heart*. It's the same in other languages, for example, in Spanish (*aprender de memoria y de corazon*), in French (*apprendre par coeur*), and, I'm told by a Chinese student, in Chinese. These phrases make explicit the connection between memorization and love.

We find in world religions the most compelling evidence that people want to

learn treasured words by heart. As we've seen, even after those the Qur'an calls "People of the Book" *got* their book (Torah/Bible/Qur'an), learning what was in it by heart—in a sense, making the physical book redundant—was central to their spiritual practice. This curious fact suggests that what we as humans most value, we feel a compulsion to memorize. We may treasure the *hard copy* form of the sacred words so much that we call ourselves "People of the Book" and wear phylacteries containing Hebrew scripture strapped to our arms and foreheads during morning worship (Buber 333-34) or carry the gospels in our glove compartments or keep small, well worn copies of the Qur'an tucked in our pockets as does "every shopkeeper in the Muslim world" (Belt 83), yet we still feel the compulsion to have the treasured words *stored in memory*. If learning by heart were merely a trivial or mindlessly mechanical pursuit, human beings throughout history would not have felt such a need to memorize the words or texts most precious to them, those that connect them to their image of the divine. Human impulses related to what we most cherish are built into our psyches for reasons important to our flourishing as human beings.

And so let's look at some of the numerous ways learning by heart can enhance our students' relationships with language and empower their personal lives.

One of the reasons learning by heart fell from favor was the realization that memorizing factual materials was not effective practical learning. Students can know factual material only through analysis, by dismantling the original text. But the opposite is true of literary texts. We have agreed that we can't separate content and form in poetry, and yet the poem or passage is dismembered by analysis and left to decay out of consciousness. Nothing remains but a bloodless précis and a few scattered images and words. Of course I'm not denying the importance of analysis in studying texts, only suggesting that we embrace the text as a synthesis as well. And the most satisfying way to do this is to commit it to memory.

It is good when memorization can precede analysis. Once students "own" a piece of writing through memorization, they feel connected to it, pleased to learn more about it. Learning by heart is particularly useful for developmental students, who, lacking the English language literacy of more privileged students, are often shy of texts. Developmental students who've learned by heart can kick off their shoes with a difficult poem or passage, let down their hair. And those from cultures with strong traditions of learning by heart may have, here, a confidence-building advantage.

A related virtue of memorization is that it takes students backstage in the creative process. In the art world, students learn to paint by copying the masters. One parallel in the written world is memorizing, repeating the writer's performance. Even the way the words or lines one by one hesitantly emerge out of consciousness gives insight into the creative mind at work.

Memorizing each murder scene completely in all its insignificant details enables Sherlock Holmes to have epiphanies, perhaps weeks later, that dazzle Scotland Yard. When we memorize a poem or passage, we are remembering every word choice, turn of phrase, and image, even those that appear unremarkable or of little meaning. Memorization thus makes possible on-going epiphanies. Old-timers knew this. In *The Teaching of English in the Elementary and Secondary School*, Percival Chubb notes how memorized poems "graft themselves deep in

the affections and reveal gradually, as the child grows, their music and meaning” (50). More recently, Sara Neilan writes in *The Times Educational Supplement* that a child “may learn something by heart and not understand it (hence those sneers about ‘parrot-fashion’). But one day, perhaps years later, he will suddenly see what it means. If he hadn’t learnt it by heart, he might never know it at all” (“Survival,” 25); “its full significance will gradually become apparent, perhaps years later. This is one of the great delayed-action joys of learning by heart: the poem opens like a flower in your head” (“Hook,” 27). I experienced this during a very serious illness of my mother. When I was a child, a family friend taught me Psalm 23. In adulthood, one line, “He leads me beside still waters,” had always puzzled me. Why *beside*—shouldn’t it be “*to* still waters”? But now, during weeks of round-the-clock anguish, I understood the preposition. Being led *to* still waters is a one-shot deal, but being led *beside* them suggests an always accessible source of stillness and refreshment, running quietly parallel to our path.

Csikszentmihalyi claims that “the normal state of the mind is chaos” (*Flow* 119). He continues, “When we are left alone, with no demands on attention, the basic disorder of the mind reveals itself. With nothing to do, it begins to follow random patterns, usually stopping to consider something painful or disturbing” (119). Perhaps this chaos is the mind’s default only because we live strained, artificial lives. Whatever the case, material learned by heart can provide the unoccupied mind with a restorative activity, a sea-wall against chaotic thoughts. “A person who can remember stories, poems, lyrics of songs [. . .] biblical passages, and wise quotations has many advantages over one who has not cultivated such a skill,” notes Csikszentmihalyi. “The consciousness of such a person is independent of the order that may or may not be provided by the environment. She can always amuse herself, and find meaning in the contents of her mind . . . Such a person is also a much more cherished companion” (*Flow* 123-24). A friend who sails reports a case in point: a five-hour night watch sitting on a dark boat deck turned merry when her watch partner began to recite an elaborate very long poem by Ogden Nash. But the practice of learning by heart does more than merely stave off the chaos of random or depressing thoughts. Csikszentmihalyi lists learning by heart as one of those activities that can bring *flow*, that euphoric feeling of timelessness, accomplishment, and growth that rewards us when we stretch our bodies or minds by focusing all our attention on a difficult but personally meaningful activity (*Flow* 3; *Evolving Self* 179-87). The act of memorization brings flow and so does the performance—for oneself or for others. Csikszentmihalyi writes, “My grandfather at seventy could still recall passages from the three thousand lines of the *Iliad* he had to learn by heart in Greek to graduate from high school. Whenever he did so, a look of pride settled on his features” (*Flow* 123).

Lewis Carroll pokes fun at the excesses of Victorian memorization, but behind the parody lies truth: what we memorize does in fact form part of who we are, part of our identity in this Looking-Glass world. When Alice tumbles down a rabbit hole, she believes she’s been changed into someone else. To reassure herself of her identity, she inventories what she knows by heart:

“I’ll try if I know all the things I used to know. Let me see: four times five is twelve [. . .]. London is the capital of Paris, and Paris

is the capital of Rome, and Rome—no, *that's* all wrong, I'm certain! I must have been changed for Mabel! I'll try and say '*How doth the little*—'" and she crossed her hands on her lap, as if she were saying lessons, and began to repeat it, but her voice sounded hoarse and strange, and the words did not come the same as they used to do. (28)

Since what she once knew by heart now seems confused and strange to her, Alice feels estranged from her own Aliceness. Perhaps she's turned into her slow-witted classmate Mabel who lives in a "poky little house" (29)? A few chapters later, Alice confides her fears to the Caterpillar after she attempts to recite a poem for her:

"That is not said right," said the Caterpillar.

"Not *quite* right, I'm afraid," said Alice timidly: "some of the words have got altered."

"It is wrong from beginning to end," said the Caterpillar." (53)

What we know by heart proves who we are—the banker asks for our mother's maiden name—and forgetting rocks our sense of identity. Indeed, in the next three pages, the borders of her Aliceness collapsed, Alice shapeshifts, nibbling the Caterpillar's mushroom. Again and again in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Alice's failure to recite correctly poems that she once knew by heart is symptomatic of her loss of identity.

Contrariwise, what's safely remembered can be very reassuring. In *Through the Looking Glass*, poems she's learned by heart help Alice orient herself in encounters with unfamiliar, even bizarre situations. For example, when she meets Humpty Dumpty perched precariously on a high wall, she repeats softly to herself, "*Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall*" (184). And when she turns a corner and stumbles upon Tweedledum and Tweedledee standing like wax-works,

the words of the old song kept ringing through her head like the ticking of a clock, and she could hardly help saying them out loud:

"*Tweedledum and Tweedledee Agreed to have a battle.*" (159-60)

Stories reassure us, in disorienting experience, that we're not crazy or alone: our experience is not an aberration. Memorization is a way of carrying these universal patterns of human experience in our hearts, not on some distant bookshelf or computer screen, but immediately accessible.

In the past, the individual was shored up from the inside by powerful content of consciousness. Think about what people used to carry around inside: their ancestor lists, epics, scriptures, creeds, hymns, poems, passages from drama, speeches, manifestos. Now all they carry around may be a few advertising slogans—this Bud's for you!—and numbers: ID numbers, phone numbers, ATM numbers. Meanwhile, never before in history have people been so barraged from the

outside with overwhelmingly trivial and often ugly clutter for the mind: commercials, talk shows, bombing bulletins, Doublespeak, celebrity gossip. If this were a physics lesson, we'd expect internal collapse. But learning by heart can give our students a way to bolster themselves internally against outside media pressure. By teaching memorization, we can help them be like the Alice of the second book, who could identify herself and steady herself with what she knew by heart as she passed through her bizarre Looking-Glass adventures.

And learning by heart can save minds or even a life should adventures turn ugly. Sarah Neilan writes about how poems learned in school helped her survive an attack of meningitis, days of "black blankness lit by lurid pain" ("Survival" 25). At the hospital, she writes, "I was sure death would come soon. I couldn't move, feed myself, or read" (25). "But," she continues, "I could recite to myself, and did, and because I had a vast repertoire, it kept up my morale" (25). As another example of the psychological advantages of learning by heart, Neilan notes that among Hungarian refugees who experienced lengthy solitary confinements, those who had memorized material to recite and ponder survived without mental illness. Csikszentmihalyi reports further stories of concentration camp prisoners relying on memorization for psychological health. Tortured and sent to a Stalinist camp where ragged inmates ate slops and suffered whippings and frost-bite, Hungarian poet Faludy used poetry—and memorization—to protect his sanity and the sanity of his prison mates. He created and memorized, poem by poem, a whole book of prison poetry:

Faludy's oeuvre [. . .] was not written down, for the simple reason that pencil and paper were not available in the camp. At first, Faludy memorized each of his poems. Then, to avoid losing them through death or forgetfulness, he had fellow prisoners learn them by heart as well. In one case, [. . .] He composed a long elegy for his wife, and each part of it was memorized by different inmates. Some of these prisoners were freed before Faludy, and went to visit his wife, to bring news of her husband and to recite the part of the poem they had memorized. At the end of the recitation, they would typically announce: "That's all I learned. But in a few days Jim Egri should be released, and he will come and tell you the next twenty verses." (*Evolving* 212)

Csikszentmihalyi cites another example from the camps: the poet Tollas Tibor and his prison mates distracted themselves from the horrors of solitary confinement for months with a poetry translation contest. The inmates knew Whitman's "O Captain! My Captain!" by heart. Each translated it into Hungarian, memorizing as they went along. Tollas wrote and memorized his translation a line at a time on the bottom of a shoe smeared with soap (*Flow* 91-92). Such survival stories suggest what a tremendous gift learning by heart can be for our students—whether or not they ever find themselves in straits as dire as these.

"For a person who has nothing to remember," Csikszentmihalyi notes, "life can become severely impoverished" (*Flow* 123). We're impoverished when the words that mean the most to us are outside of us. And that's pretty much our case today, all of us, students and teachers. Today, when we need words for joy, wis-

dom, comfort, courage, we have to dig out the book, log onto the Net, or drive downtown to the cafe bookstore. We no longer stock our hearts with life-shaping words. Young and old, we lack an inner world of beautiful, powerful, significant language.

At the start of a new century, let's offer that world to our students again: let's ask them to learn by heart. We can find good material everywhere—favorite pieces from each student's own personal canon, powerful writing we as teachers fell in love with last week, passages from our multicultural anthologies. Students lucky enough to be bilingual can ask their elders to teach them traditional pieces, Spanish, Tewa, Vietnamese. We can seek out the best English renderings of new or old poetry and lyrical prose from around the world (Coleman Barks has taken our breath away with over twenty-five years of Rumi translations [Moyers 43-58] and has proved that sometimes almost nothing “gets lost in the translation”). Of course, while we want our students to enjoy memorizing for the classroom, our goal should be, above all, that they acquire for themselves the lifelong habit of consigning to memory the words that matter most to them.

I like to read Wallace Stevens' “Poetry Is a Destructive Force” as a manifesto for learning by heart. After defining misery as having “nothing [. . .] at heart”—no red-blooded words, just “spit”—Stevens describes what it is to have at heart powerful words. It is like having our body privileged by animal spirits, vibrantly alive, that make us strong and confident to press against the world:

That's what misery is
Nothing to have at heart.
It is to have or nothing.

It is a thing to have,
A lion, an ox in his breast.
To feel it breathing there.

Corazon, stout dog,
Young ox, bow-legged bear,
He tastes its blood, not spit.



Works Cited

- Arden, Harvey. “The Pious Ones.” *National Geographic* Aug. 1975: 276-98.
- Belt, Don. “The World of Islam.” *National Geographic* Jan 2002: 76-85.
- Bishop, Elizabeth. Book jacket. Robert Lowell. *Selected Poems*. New York: Farrar, 1976.
- Bolenius, Emma. *Teaching Literature in the Grammar Grades and High School*. Boston: Houghton, 1915.
- Brumberg, Stephan F. “Going to America, Going to School.” *American Jewish Archives* 36.2 (1984): 86-135.

- Buber, Martin. *Tales of the Hasidim: Later Masters*. New York: Schocken, 1969.
- Carroll, Lewis. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass*. New York: Signet-Penguin, 2000.
- Casey, Edward G. *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1987.
- Chubb, Percival. *Teaching of English in the Elementary and Secondary School*. New York: Macmillan, 1924.
- Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. *Flow*. New York: Harper, 1990.
- . *The Evolving Self*. New York: HarperCollins, 1994.
- Harmouch, Mahmoud. Personal interview. 10 May 2002.
- Hunt, Morton M. *The Universe Within*. New York: Simon, 1982.
- Iovine, Julie. "Writing on the Wall." *Metropolitan Home* Nov. 1992: 90-94.
- Moyers, Bill. *The Language of Life: A Festival of Poets*. New York: Doubleday, 1995.
- Neilan, Sarah. "Survival Tactics." *Times Educational Supplement* 8 Nov 1990: 25.
- . "Hook, Line and Sister Helena." *Times Educational Supplement* 8 March 1991: 27.
- Wagner, Daniel, and Abdelhamid Lotfi. "Traditional Islamic Education in Morocco." *Comparative Education Review* 24 (1980): 238-51.
- Wirth, Arthur G. *John Dewey as Educator*. New York: Wiley, 1966.