

Table 1: Ranking of Leading Poets by Total Entries in “The Best American Poetry of the Twentieth Century”

| Poet | Total entries listed | Number of different poems listed |
|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. William Carlos Williams | 12 | 7 |
| 2. Robert Frost | 11 | 9 |
| 3t. Elizabeth Bishop | 10 | 9 |
| 3t. Wallace Stevens | 10 | 8 |
| 5t. Hart Crane | 9 | 5 |
| 5t. T. S. Eliot | 9 | 4 |
| 7. Marianne Moore | 8 | 6 |
| 8. W. H. Auden | 7 | 4 |

Note: All poems listed were included in this tabulation, including those identified as runners-up or alternates. Richard Howard’s list, which consisted of books rather than poems, was excluded.

Source: Rita Dove, ed., *The Best American Poetry 2000* (New York: Scribner, 2000), pp. 271-84.

Table 2: Ranking of Leading Poems by Total Entries

| Author, poem | N |
|---|---|
| 1. T. S. Eliot, "The Waste Land" | 5 |
| 2t. W. H. Auden, "In Praise of Limestone" | 4 |
| 2t. John Berryman, <i>77 Dream Songs</i> | 4 |
| 2t. Hart Crane, "Voyages" | 4 |
| 2t. James Merrill, "The Book of Ephraim" | 4 |
| 2t. William Carlos Williams, "Spring and All" | 4 |
| 7t. Hart Crane, "The Bridge" | 3 |
| 7t. William Carlos Williams, "Asphodel, That Greeny Flower" | 3 |

Source: see Table 1.

Table 3: Poets Included in this Study

| Poet | Year of birth | Year of death |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Bishop, Elizabeth | 1911 | 1979 |
| Cummings, E. E. | 1894 | 1962 |
| Eliot, T. S. | 1888 | 1965 |
| Frost, Robert | 1874 | 1963 |
| Lowell, Robert | 1917 | 1977 |
| Moore, Marianne | 1887 | 1972 |
| Plath, Sylvia | 1932 | 1963 |
| Pound, Ezra | 1885 | 1972 |
| Stevens, Wallace | 1879 | 1955 |
| Wilbur, Richard | 1921 | -- |
| Williams, William Carlos | 1883 | 1963 |

Source: see text.

Table 4: Ranking of Poets by Total Anthology Entries

| Poet | Entries |
|----------|---------|
| Frost | 503 |
| Williams | 371 |
| Stevens | 361 |
| Pound | 237 |
| Lowell | 221 |
| Cummings | 209 |
| Plath | 205 |
| Bishop | 203 |
| Moore | 187 |
| Eliot | 166 |
| Wilbur | 153 |

Source: This and all subsequent tables are based on the data set constructed for this study. See the text and appendix for a description.

Table 5: Ranking of Leading Poems by Anthology Entries

| Poet, poem | Date | Age | Entries |
|--|------|-----|---------|
| 1. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" | 1911 | 23 | 31 |
| 1. Lowell, "Skunk Hour" | 1958 | 41 | 31 |
| 3. Frost, "Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening" | 1922 | 48 | 29 |
| 4. Williams, "The Red Wheelbarrow" | 1923 | 40 | 28 |
| 5. Bishop, "The Fish" | 1940 | 29 | 25 |
| 5. Pound, "The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter" | 1915 | 30 | 25 |
| 7. Plath, "Daddy" | 1962 | 30 | 24 |
| 7. Pound, "In a Station of the Metro" | 1913 | 28 | 24 |
| 9. Williams, "The Dance" | 1942 | 59 | 23 |
| 9. Frost, "Mending Wall" | 1912 | 38 | 23 |
| 9. Stevens, "The Snow Man" | 1921 | 42 | 23 |
| 12. Stevens, "The Emperor of Ice-Cream" | 1922 | 43 | 22 |
| 12. Stevens, "Sunday Morning" | 1915 | 36 | 22 |
| 12. Stevens, "The Idea of Order at Key West" | 1934 | 55 | 22 |
| 12. Williams, "This is Just to Say" | 1934 | 51 | 22 |
| 16. Moore, "Poetry" | 1919 | 32 | 21 |
| 16. Frost, "The Road Not Taken" | 1916 | 42 | 21 |
| 18. Lowell, "For the Union Dead" | 1959 | 42 | 20 |
| 18. Plath, "Lady Lazarus" | 1962 | 30 | 20 |
| 20. Bishop, "One Art" | 1976 | 65 | 19 |
| 20. Stevens, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" | 1917 | 38 | 19 |

Table 6: Percentage Distributions of Anthology Entries, by Poet's Age

| Poet | Age: | 20-9 | 30-9 | 40-9 | 50-9 | 60-9 | 70-9 | 80-9 | Total |
|----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Bishop | | 25 | 15 | 29 | 4 | 27 | -- | -- | 100 |
| Cummings | | 31 | 28 | 25 | 6 | 10 | -- | -- | 100 |
| Eliot | | 33 | 40 | 17 | 10 | 0 | 0 | -- | 100 |
| Frost | | 0 | 8 | 50 | 8 | 29 | 4 | 1 | 100 |
| Lowell | | 17 | 2 | 56 | 19 | 6 | -- | -- | 100 |
| Moore | | 11 | 49 | 18 | 19 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 100 |
| Plath | | 30 | 70 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 100 |
| Pound | | 48 | 37 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 100 |
| Stevens | | 0 | 22 | 29 | 18 | 16 | 15 | -- | 100 |
| Wilbur | | 38 | 31 | 13 | 12 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| Williams | | 0 | 23 | 33 | 23 | 7 | 14 | 0 | 100 |

Table 7: Ages of Poets in Five Best Years, by Total Anthology Entries

| Poet | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|----------|----|--------|----|------------|----|
| Bishop | 29 | 45 | 60 | 65 | 46 |
| Cummings | 46 | 26 | 37 | 28 | 32 |
| Eliot | 23 | 39 | 30 | 27, 47 | -- |
| Frost | 42 | 62 | 68 | 49 | 54 |
| Lowell | 41 | 42 | 29 | 47 | 52 |
| Moore | 37 | 32, 45 | -- | 34, 56 | -- |
| Plath | 30 | 31 | 28 | 29 | 25 |
| Pound | 28 | 27, 30 | -- | 35 | 36 |
| Stevens | 36 | 43 | 42 | 55 | 40 |
| Wilbur | 27 | 34 | 55 | 26, 29, 47 | -- |
| Williams | 40 | 51 | 38 | 59 | 33 |

Note: multiple entries indicate ties.

Table 8: Mean and Median Ages of Poets in Their Five Best Years

| Poet | Mean | Median |
|----------|------|--------|
| Frost | 55 | 54 |
| Bishop | 49 | 46 |
| Williams | 44 | 40 |
| Stevens | 43 | 42 |
| Lowell | 42 | 42 |
| Moore | 41 | 37 |
| Wilbur | 36 | 29 |
| Cummings | 34 | 28 |
| Eliot | 33 | 30 |
| Pound | 31 | 30 |
| Plath | 29 | 29 |

Table 9: Total Anthology Entries, by Poet, of Poems Written through the Age of 31

| Poet | Entries |
|----------|---------|
| Plath | 205 |
| Pound | 145 |
| Cummings | 75 |
| Eliot | 72 |
| Wilbur | 57 |
| Bishop | 52 |
| Lowell | 35 |
| Moore | 34 |
| Williams | 2 |
| Frost | 0 |
| Stevens | 0 |

Table 10: Poets' Ages in the Earliest of Their Best Five Years

| Poet | Age |
|----------|-----|
| Frost | 42 |
| Stevens | 36 |
| Williams | 33 |
| Moore | 32 |
| Bishop | 29 |
| Lowell | 29 |
| Pound | 27 |
| Cummings | 26 |
| Wilbur | 26 |
| Plath | 25 |
| Eliot | 23 |

Table 11: Poets' Ages in the Latest of Their Best Five Years

| Poet | Age |
|----------|-----|
| Frost | 68 |
| Bishop | 65 |
| Williams | 59 |
| Moore | 56 |
| Stevens | 55 |
| Wilbur | 55 |
| Lowell | 52 |
| Eliot | 47 |
| Cummings | 46 |
| Pound | 36 |
| Plath | 31 |

Table 12: Poets' Ages When They Wrote Their Five Most Often Reprinted Poems

| Poet | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Mean | Median |
|----------|----|------------|------------|----|--------|------|--------|
| Bishop | 29 | 65 | 60 | 45 | 46 | 49 | 46 |
| Frost | 48 | 38 | 42 | 42 | 49, 62 | 47 | 45 |
| Williams | 40 | 59 | 51 | 40 | 38 | 46 | 40 |
| Stevens | 42 | 36, 43, 55 | -- | -- | 38 | 43 | 42 |
| Moore | 32 | 34 | 45 | 31 | 56 | 40 | 34 |
| Cummings | 26 | 46 | 26 | 37 | 46 | 36 | 37 |
| Lowell | 41 | 42 | 29 | 29 | 41 | 36 | 41 |
| Wilbur | 34 | 27 | 29, 29, 55 | -- | -- | 34 | 29 |
| Eliot | 23 | 39 | 30 | 34 | 32 | 32 | 32 |
| Plath | 30 | 30 | 29 | 30 | 28, 30 | 30 | 30 |
| Pound | 30 | 28 | 35 | 27 | 27, 28 | 29 | 28 |

Note: multiple entries indicate ties.

Table 13: Poems Written at Age 25 or Earlier that Appear in Five or More Anthologies

| Author, poem | Age | Anthologies |
|---|-----|-------------|
| 1. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" | 23 | 31 |
| 2. Bishop, "The Man-Moth" | 25 | 7 |
| 3. Cummings, "All in green went my love riding" | 22 | 7 |
| 4. Plath, "Black Rook in Rainy Weather" | 25 | 6 |

Table 14: Poems Written at Age 65 or Later that Appear in Five or More Anthologies

| Author, poem | Age | Anthologies |
|---|-----|-------------|
| 1. Bishop, "One Art" | 65 | 19 |
| 2. Frost, "The Gift Outright" | 68 | 14 |
| 3t. Frost, "Never Again Would Birds' Song be the Same" | 68 | 12 |
| 3t. Frost, "The Silken Tent" | 68 | 12 |
| 5. Frost, "Directive" | 73 | 9 |
| 6. Williams, "Pictures from Brueghel II: Landscape with the Fall of Icarus" | 77 | 8 |
| 7. Stevens, "The Plain Sense of Things" | 73 | 7 |
| 8t. Frost, "The Draft Horse" | 73 | 6 |
| 8t. Stevens, "The House was Quiet and the World was Calm" | 67 | 6 |
| 8t. Stevens, "Final Soliloquy of the Interior Paramour" | 72 | 6 |
| 8t. Stevens, "Not Ideas about the Thing but the Thing Itself" | 75 | 6 |
| 12t. Stevens, "To an Old Philosopher in Rome" | 73 | 5 |
| 12t. Williams, "Descent" | 71 | 5 |
| 12t. Williams, "The Ivy Crown" | 71 | 5 |
| 12t. Williams, "The Sparrow" | 72 | 5 |