

## Spring Prose & Poetry Recitation

For each season of the year we try to commit some verse or a prose selection to memory. There is no better way to relish the beauty and power of our native tongue or reflect with delight on the truth that makes us free.

Past selections have included David Middleton's "Of Magnanimity," Christina Rossetti's "In the Bleak Midwinter," a letter of counsel from Thomas Jefferson to a young lad (Thomas Jefferson Smith), both "God Moves in a Mysterious Way" and "To a Young Lady" by William Cowper, and last season's "To the Reverend Sister Marianne" by Robert Louis Stevenson.

For the spring months of 2013, we'll try **John Donne's "Holy Sonnet XIV."** Donne (1572--1631), appointed Anglican dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in 1621, was a master of homiletics as well as one of the greatest of the so-called "metaphysical poets" of 17th-century England. He was also the answer to one of our questions on the 2013 Winter History & Heritage Test. The sonnet is reprinted below.

### Holy Sonnet XIV

John Donne

**Batter my heart, three-person'd God; for you  
As yet but knock; breathe, shine, and seek to mend;  
That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend  
Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.  
I, like an usurp'd town to another due,  
Labor to admit you, but oh, to no end;  
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,  
But is captiv'd and proves weak or untrue.  
Yet dearly I love you, and would be lov'd fain,  
But I am bethroth'd unto your enemy;  
Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,  
Take me to you, imprison me, for I,  
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,  
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.**