# Performing & Presenting Poems

### If a job's worth doing...

Shuffle to the front of the class, mumble a poem with your head down and your shoulders up around your ears and then ask them what was wrong. They will be able to tell you: they couldn't hear it; you didn't sound interested or make it sound interesting to them; you made no eye contact so they felt no engagement with you...

Reading a poem aloud can help to build confidence for all sorts of situations, from making speeches at weddings to giving presentations at job interviews.

Why is someone afraid of reading aloud? Is it because they don't like folk looking at them, or is it because they fear the very words – these are not words they would normally speak. You can easily find inventive and creative ways around each of these.

### Tips for success

- Think about the poem, when it was written, who by and who for, what it is about, the mood and tone of it and so on - annotate a large well-spaced copy of the poem to keep track of ideas.

- Then, discuss and plan how you think it should be read.

- Listen to poets and other people reading poetry. Who do you like and why?

- Does it help to adopt a particular persona for the reading, or is it better to be natural?

- Provide moral support in the way of sharing readings, or distracting from the reader by providing other visual accompaniment.

- Go further and design a group choral performance, working together to decide on parts and voices, repeats, echoes, etc, to turn the flat text into a truly dynamic experience. Compare each group's approach to the same verse, or each group take a different verse and present to the class. Percussion might be included, and other sound effects, and a drama space could be helpful to allow room to experiment!

- Used well - with regard to relevance, meaning and the creation of harmony or disharmony - technology can help to further understanding and appreciation of language as well as providing different means of presentation and enhancing ICT skills.

- The same is true of using other art forms to present poetry. The end result doesn't need to be a print-out or an anthology.