



The Swing by Robert Louis Stevenson was the first poem I ever memorized. It wasn't a school assignment, and it wasn't something I set out to do. *The Swing* was like a best-selling song that becomes an earworm. At seven, no matter where I was or how I felt – when I recited that poem, I was transported to a swing on my elementary school playground. The rhythm of the poem and the imagery in those three stanzas was a delight, from “the sky so blue... to the cattle... to the roof so brown”, I could feel the gentle breeze and float of freedom.

Stevenson's Swing

my favorite poem
is not a poem
anymore
but a memory
of where we met
tilting the edge
of language
slicing its way
into my jaw
ajar
swallowing laughter
sand kicked its
inch pinching
nerves across my arms
an itch of breeze
only relieved
by
do it again
and
do it again
and
one more time
short-of-breath
like hanging
from monkey bars
toedrumming
up
exhale
up
ground
unbound
up
winged
hair
flying

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What was the first poem you remember hearing and enjoying? What was the first poem you memorized? Do you remember why? Where were you when you think about that first poem?