

Seasons



The Essential Poetry

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BBC Two celebrates the nation's love of poetry with poems about the whole range of emotions associated with that peculiar human condition called love.

Essential Poems (To Fall In Love With) is an innovative visual anthology of poetry to warm hearts on cold winter days. Writer Daisy Goodwin leads viewers on a poetic journey through the ups and downs of being in and out of love. The series opens with an examination of the early, heady days of romance – touching on flirting, playing the dating game, and unrequited love. The physical manifestations of love form the basis of the second part, examining through poetry the symptoms of love, wild nights, the morning after, just say no, and wedding bells. Programme three dwells on family life – parenthood and relatives; part four, looks at falling out of love, affairs and breaking up; and finally the series closes with the theme of lasting love.

Favourite actors and celebrities, including Damian Lewis, Christopher Lee, Amanda Holden, Lesley Manville, Jimi Mistry, Prunella Scales and Ioan Gruffudd recite some of the world's most memorable love poetry, including Andrew Marvell's *To His Coy Mistress*, *Sonnet 129* by William Shakespeare and *Bloody Men* by Wendy Cope. Each poem is filmed in the style of a mini-drama, set in a contemporary location – each location evoking the themes of the verse.

Buddhism

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A season of programmes

explores the history of Buddhism and its role in contemporary Western life, and examines the growth and appeal of this increasingly popular religion. It features an exclusive interview with the most high-profile convert to Buddhism, Richard Gere.

Life OfThe Buddha is a landmark documentary following one man's spiritual journey to Enlightenment. Filmed on location in India and Nepal, *Life OfThe Buddha* recreates a remarkable life story and looks at the impact of the Buddha's teachings today.

Siddhartha Gautama, who came to be known as "the Buddha" (one who is awake), was born into a royal family in Nepal in the 6th century BC. His life of privilege insulated him from suffering, from sickness, age and death, but he abandoned his palaces for a journey that took him to the verge of starvation and eventual Enlightenment while meditating beneath the Bodhi tree.

Life OfThe Buddha visits the locations associated with Siddhartha's journey – from Lumbini, where Buddha was first said to have touched the earth, to the descent of the very tree under which Buddha sat at Bodhgaya. The programme uses recent archaeological discoveries, aided by computer-generated images and dramatised episodes, to recreate the path to Enlightenment and beyond.

Richard Gere – Celebrity Buddhist is an exclusive in-depth interview with the most high-profile convert to Buddhism. Richard Gere talks candidly about his faith and the influence it has had on his life. For over 20 years, Gere has been a proponent of Tibetan Buddhism and both a student and friend to the Dalai Lama.

Success on stage and screen has also allowed Gere to draw direct attention to the Chinese occupation of Tibet. *Celebrity Buddhist* travels to India to look at the work of the Gere Foundation, which supports the cultural survival of the Tibetan people through a series of health, technological and educational projects.

The Buddhists Of Suburbia follows three people on the brink of life-changing journeys. Abhayakirti, Teresa and Bessie are all converts to Buddhism. They are ready to have their new-found faith tested as they try to devote themselves to living better lives.

Jewish-born Abhayakirti visits Auschwitz Concentration Camp to try to come to terms with the horrors of the genocide that killed members of his family; Teresa gives up her successful career as a scientist to move into a Buddhist community with six other women and to work in the community café; and 26-year-old Bessie is about to leave the UK to travel to Bodhgaya, where she will study under the tutelage of Lama Zopa.



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