

Poetry is going extinct, government data show

By Christopher Ingraham, Washington Post

Is verse a dying technique? How dead is poetry? Who killed poetry? Does anybody care? Is poetry dead? Is poetry dead? Is poetry dead?

Inquiries into the death of poetry comprise a tradition almost as rich and varied as American poetry itself. Earlier this month, a college literary magazine proposed a tidy solution to the evergreen problem: “if you have to keep declaring, over and over, that poetry is dead, it can’t actually be dead.”

Fair enough. Most of discussion around the question involves qualitative assessments that are inherently unsolvable. Is poetry too political, or not political enough? Is it too popular, or too elitist? Too pretentious or too profane?

I can’t answer any of these questions. But there are a number of facts about poetry that are knowable, and given that April is National Poetry Month (which I bet you didn’t know), now would be a good time to know them.

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