



*Demosthenes, Athenian statesman
384-322 BC, practising oratory*

A Serious Poem

This is a serious poem
It wears a serious face
It will not fritter away the words
It knows its place.

Perfectly balanced
Neither too long nor too short
It gazes solemnly heavenwards
Like a real poem ought.

Familiar with the classics
It drops names with ease.
Here comes Plato with Lycidas
And look, there's Demosthenes!

A serious poem will often end
With two lines that rhyme.
But not always.

Roger McGough



Photo by Nick Wright, 9th April

Roger McGough sits behind a window at home in Barnes, writing poetry during the coronavirus lockdown.

One of Britain's best-loved poets, he came to fame with *The Mersey Sound*, a collection with fellow Liverpool poets Adrian Henri and Brian Patten, and performing with Mike McCartney and John Gorman in *The Scaffold* (*Lily the Pink anybody?*)

His internationally acclaimed collections of poetry and stories led to an MBE and then an OBE, and he now presents the popular and long-running Radio 4 programme *Poetry Please*.

The former Poet Laureate Carol Anne Duffy called him "The patron saint of poetry".

Suggested by Judith Telfer