

Daniel Xerri

In this column, NATE invites one of its active members to reflect on some of the things that have inspired them in life, literature and English teaching. This term's teacher is **Daniel Xerri**, one of NATE's international members, from Malta.



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The books?

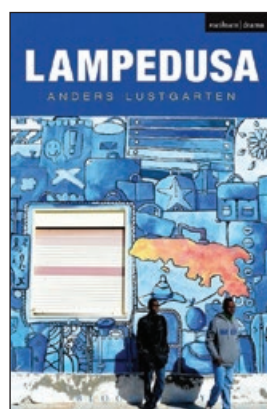
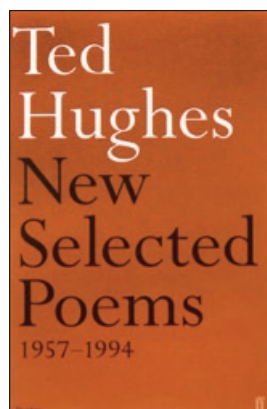
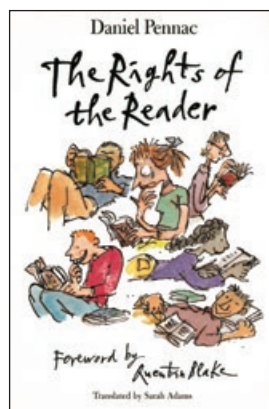
- My tastes in reading are quite eclectic, but I'm especially fond of travel literature and novels by Ian McEwan and Andrew Miller.
- One of the best books I've read about reading is Daniel Pennac's *The Rights of the Reader*. It inspired my first contribution to *English Drama Media*, the predecessor of *Teaching English*.
- My favourite poet is Ted Hughes, whose work I wrote about for my M.A. Over the years I've had the opportunity of interviewing many contemporary poets from all over the world, and thanks to these interviews I keep being given recommendations about poets I should be reading and listening to.

The Culture?

- I'm passionate about the theatre and I try to catch a play every few weeks. I recently enjoyed the stage adaptation of *The Kite Runner*, which was being performed at Wyndham's Theatre in London. On the other hand, I wasn't too happy with Kit Harington's performance in *Doctor Faustus* last year.



- One of the most powerful plays I've ever watched is Anders Lustgarten's *Lampedusa*, which focuses on migration. The monologues by Stefano, whose job is to fish for the bodies of migrants who drown on their way to Europe from North Africa, are especially poignant. I ended up quoting part of his monologues in a chapter I wrote recently on understanding migration through multicultural literature.
- I also consider myself a lover of opera. In the past few months, I've seen *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Aida* and *Carmen* among other productions. Whenever I'm travelling, I'm always on the lookout for opera productions in the cities I'm visiting. I've been lucky enough to see productions at some world-famous opera houses, including the Sydney Opera House, Mariinsky Theatre and Opera Bastille.
- I don't go to the cinema often but I'm hooked on television series. My favourites are probably *House of Cards* and most Scandinavian crime dramas. I recently finished watching *The Young Pope*. I think Jude Law is absolutely brilliant in it.



The Spare Time?

- I enjoy the combination of travel and extreme sports. Some examples of this is when I did sky diving over the Mojave Desert in Nevada, bungee jumping in South Africa, and white water rafting in Bali. Hiking and swimming are two activities I tend to do whenever I feel the need to unplug.

The Teaching?

- I worked at a post-16 college for eight years before being employed full-time at the University of Malta. Teaching literary criticism was one of the biggest joys of preparing students for their A Level in English. My first attempt at action research focused on helping students to rewrite a poem we had discussed in class. This ended up being published as an article in *English in Education*, NATE's academic journal. A couple of years later, I was pleased to be awarded the Terry Furlong Prize for Research at the 2013 NATE Conference for a second article I published in the journal. Through NATE, I've made many good friends in the field of poetry education.

