

Quotes on Poets and Poetry



Mankind's Wisdom on Poetry
from
Shakespeare to Shelley

Quotes on Poets and Poetry

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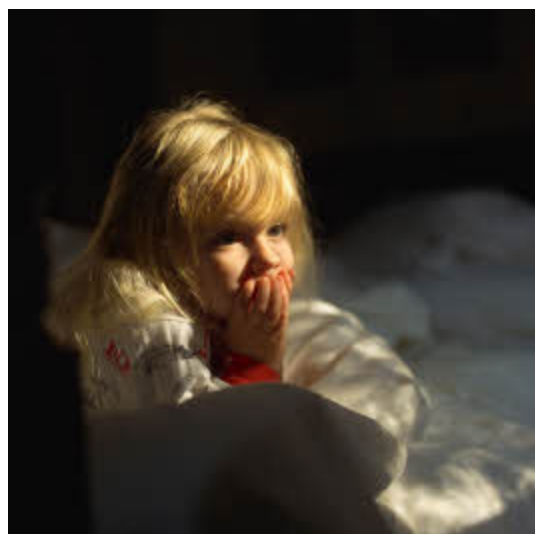
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For Poets *and* *their* Poetry



Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty
of the world, and makes familiar objects be
as if they were not familiar.

Percy Shelley



Poetry is the revelation of a feeling that the poet
believes to be interior and personal which
the reader recognizes as his own.

Salvatore

The great beauty of Poetry is, that it makes
every thing, every place, interesting.

John Keats

Poetry is the language
in which man explores his own amazement . .
says heaven and earth in one word . . .
speaks of himself and his predicament
as though for the first time.

Christopher Fry

For there is no heroic poem in the world but is at
bottom a biography, the life of a man; also,
it may be said, there is no life of a man,
faithfully recorded, but is a heroic poem
of its sort, rhymed or unrhymed.

Thomas Carlyle

A poet is someone who is astonished by everything.

Unknown



If there were no poetry on any day in the world,
poetry would be invented that day.
For there would be an intolerable hunger.

Muriel Rukeyser

Reality only reveals itself when it is
illuminated by a ray of poetry.

Georges Braque

Painting is silent poetry.
Poetry is painting with the gift of speech.

Simonides

The most valuable of talents is never using
two words when one will do.

Thomas Jefferson

Poetry... should strike the reader as a wording
of his own highest thoughts, and appear
almost a remembrance.

John Keats

If Galileo had said in verse that the world moved,
the inquisition might have let him alone.

Thomas Hardy



Poetry is at least an elegance and at most a revelation.

Robert Fitzgerald

*When you do things from your soul, you feel
a river moving in you, a joy.*

Rumi

*It does not need that a poem should be long.
Every word was once a poem.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

*Imagination is the only weapon
in the war against reality.*

Jules de Gautier

*Poetry is plucking at the heartstrings,
and making music with them.*

Dennis Gabor

Say as you think and speak it from your souls.

William Shakespeare

Poetry is a language pared down to its essentials.

Ezra Pound



At the touch of love everyone becomes a poet.

Plato

*The artist does not tinker with the universe,
he recreates it out of his own experience
and understanding of life.*

Henry Miller

Poetry begins in delight and ends in wisdom.

Robert Frost

Poetry is the deification of reality.

Edith Sitwell

*But words are things, and a small drop of ink,
Falling, like dew, upon a thought, produces
That which makes thousands,
Perhaps millions, think.*

Lord Byron

*To feel most beautifully alive means to be reading
something beautiful, ready always to
apprehend in the flow of language
the sudden flash of poetry.*

Gaston Bachelard



No man was ever yet a great poet, without being
at the same time a profound philosopher.
For poetry is the blossom and the fragrance
of all human knowledge, human thoughts,
human passions, emotions, language.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Poetic power is great, strong as a primitive instinct;
it has its own unyielding rhythms in itself
and breaks out as out of mountains.

Rainer Maria Rilke

The language beneath the language:
This is poetry.

Andrea Pacione

Poetry lies its way to the truth.

John Ciardi

Poetry heals the wounds inflicted by reason.

Novalis

Of our conflicts with others we make rhetoric;
of our conflicts with ourselves we make poetry.

William Butler Yeats



*The two most engaging powers of an author
are to make new things familiar,
and familiar things new.*

Samuel Johnson

*Homer has taught all other poets the
art of telling lies skillfully.*

Aristotle

A good poet's made as well as born.

Ben Johnson

*Poetry is not only dream and vision;
it is the skeleton architecture of our lives.
It lays the foundations for a future of change,
a bridge across our fears of what
has never been before.*

Audre Lorde

*A man should hear a little music,
read a little poetry, and see a fine picture
every day of his life, in order that worldly cares
may not obliterate the sense of the beautiful which
God has implanted in the human soul.*

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe



Writing a book of poetry is like dropping a rose
petal down the Grand Canyon
and waiting for the echo.

Don Marquis

Poetry is the journal of a sea animal living
on land wanting to fly in the air.

Carl Sandburg

For poems are not, as people think,
simply emotions...they are experiences.
For the sake of a single poem...you must
understand animals, must feel how birds fly,
and know the gesture which small flowers
make when they open in the morning.

Rainer Maria Rilke

Poetry is the universal language which
the heart holds with nature and itself.

William Hazlitt

.... poetry is something more scientific and serious than
history, because poetry tends to give general
truths while history gives particular facts.

Aristotle



Poetry is *the* *rhythmical* creation of beauty in words.

Edgar Allan Poe

It is *the* job of poetry to clean up our word-clogged reality by creating silences around things

Stephen Mallarme

Poetry: *the* best words in *the* best order.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

A poet dares be just so clear and no clearer...
He unzips the veil from beauty,
but does not remove it.

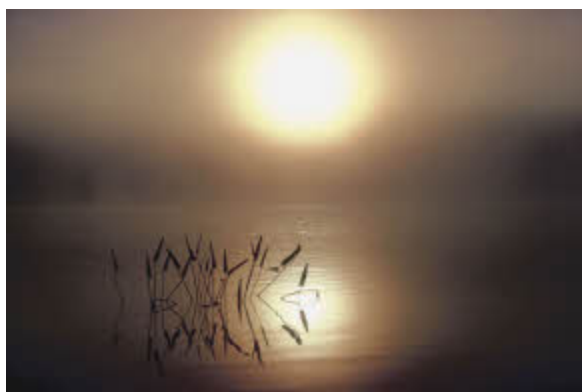
E. B. White

Poetry *which* owes no man anything, owes nevertheless one debt -- an image of the world in *which* men can again believe.

Archibald MacLeish

Poetry is *the* way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought. The farthest horizons of our hopes and fears are cobbled by our poems, carved from the rock experiences of our daily lives.

Audre Lorde



*My poetry was born between the hill and the river,
it took its voice from the rain, and like the timber,
it steeped itself in the forests.*

Pablo Neruda

Poetry is the art of uniting pleasure with truth.

Samuel Johnson

*A poem is a construction of inner space.
Language is to inner space as light
is to material space.*

Sven Birkerts

*As naturally as the oak bears an acorn and
the vine a gourd, man bears a poem,
either spoken or done.*

Henry David Thoreau

*All good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of
powerful feelings: it takes its origin from
emotion recollected in tranquility.*

William Wordsworth

Poetry is the utterance of deep and heart felt truth.

Edwin Hubbel Chapin



Poetry is not *the* record of an event, it is an event.

Robert Lowell

Poetry is of so subtle a spirit, that in the pouring
out of one language into another
it will evaporate.

John Denham

Poets are soldiers that liberate words from the
steadfast possession of definition.

Eli Khamarov

The poet doesn't invent. He listens.

Jean Cocteau

Painting is poetry that is seen rather than felt,
and poetry is painting that is
felt rather than seen.

Leonardo da Vinci

... it is through poetry that we give name to those ideas
which are until the poem, nameless and formless,
about to be birthed, but already felt.

Audre Lorde



*The crown of literature is poetry. The writer of prose
can only step aside when the poet passes.*

W. Somerset Maugham

*A musician must make music, an artist must paint,
a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately
at peace with himself.*

Abraham Maslow

*Bring me all of your dreams,
You dreamers...
Bring me all of your heart melodies
That I may wrap them
In a blue cloud-cloth
Away from the too-rough fingers
Of the world.*

Langston Hughes

*Poetry is an orphan of silence. The words never
quite equal the experience behind them.*

Charles Simic

*As to the pure mind all things are pure, so to the
poetic mind all things are poetical.*

Henry W. Longfellow



*The true philosopher and the true poet are one,
and a beauty, which is truth, and a truth,
which is beauty, is the aim of both.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

*Great poetry is always written by somebody
straining to go beyond what he can do.*

Stephen Spender

*Poetry must have something in it that
is barbaric, vast and wild.*

Denis Diderot

Poetry is a way of taking life by the throat.

Robert Frost

*Teach your children poetry; it opens the mind,
lends grace to wisdom and makes the
heroic virtues hereditary.*

Sir Walter Scott

*Poets and heroes are of the same race, the latter
do what the former conceive.*

Alphonse de Lamartine



Poetry is thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.

Thomas Gray

We all write poems; it is simply that the poets
are the ones who write in words.

John Fowles

Poetry is nearer to vital truth than history.

Plato

I write poetry in order to live more fully.

Judith Rodriguez

You will find poetry nowhere unless
you bring some with you.

Joubert

We can only approach the gods through poetry.

Thomas Moore

The poet and the politician have this in common:
their greatness depends on the courage with
which they face the challenges of life.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy



What the poet says has never been said before,
but, once he has said it, his readers recognize
its validity for themselves.

W. H. Auden

A poet's work is to name the unnameable,
to point at frauds, to take sides, start arguments,
shape the world, and stop it going to sleep.

Salman Rushdie

Good poetry could not have been
otherwise written than it is.
The first time you hear it,
it sounds rather as if copied
out of some invisible tablet
in the Eternal mind than as if
arbitrarily composed by the poet.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Science sees signs; Poetry the thing signified.

Augustus and Julius Hare

Poetry is when an emotion has found its thought
and the thought has found words.

Robert Frost



With me poetry has not been a purpose, but a passion.

Edgar Allan Poe

*Poetry is the music of the soul, and, above all,
of great and feeling souls.*

Voltaire

Writing a poem is discovering.

Robert Frost

*Poetry is a rich, full-bodied whistle,
cracked ice crunching in pails,
the night that numbs the leaf,
the duel of two nightingales,
the sweet pea that has run wild...*

Boris Pasternak

Poetry is a packsack of invisible keepsakes.

Carl Sandburg

*A poet is a bird of unearthly excellence, who escapes
from his celestial realm and arrives in this world
warbling. If we do not cherish him, he spreads
his wings and flies back into his homeland.*

Kahlil Gibran



Poetry is a sword of lightning, ever unsheathed, which consumes the scabbard that would contain it.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

There is not a particle of life which does not bear poetry within it.

Gustave Flaubert

Poetry is truth in its Sunday clothes.

Joseph Roux

...poetry was all written before time was, and whenever we are so finely organized that we can penetrate into that region where the air is music, we hear those primal warblings, and attempt to write them down, but we lose ever and anon a word, a verse, and substitute something of our own and thus miswrite the poem.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Poetry is ordinary language raised to the nth power.

Paul Engle

Science is for those who learn; poetry, for those who know.

Joseph Roux



Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge.

William Wordsworth

In the mouth of a competent speaker, the poem
is suddenly whole and alive, a spirit.
It transcends the austere silence of the page.
If only for a moment, all chariot and whirlwind.

John Pech

It is difficult to get the news from poems
yet men die miserably every day
for lack of what is found there.

William Carlos Williams

Poetry makes nothing happen. It survives
in the valley of its saying.

Maxine Kumin

Poetry is to prose as dancing is to walking.

John Wain

Poetry is finer and more philosophical than history;
for poetry expresses the universal, and
history only the particular.

Aristotle



Poetry is an echo, asking a shadow to dance.

Carl Sandburg

The office of poetry is not to make us think
accurately, but feel truly.

Frederick William Robertson

Poetry should be great and unobtrusive,
a thing which enters into one's soul, and
does not startle it or amaze it with
itself, but with its subject.

John Keats

Poetry is truth dwelling in beauty.

Robert Gilfillan

A poem begins with a lump in the throat.

Robert Frost

The poet is a liar who always speaks the truth.

Jean Cocteau

Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.

Percy Bysshe Shelley



Begin to weave and God will give you the thread.

German Proverb

*A poet is a nightingale, who sits in darkness
and sings to cheer its own solitude
with sweet sounds.*

Percy Bysshe Shelley

*For me, poetry is an impish attempt
to paint the color of the wind.*

Maxwell Bodenheim

*To see the Summer Sky
Is Poetry, though never in a Book it lie—
True Poems flee—*

Emily Dickinson

*The sources of poetry are in the spirit
seeking completeness.*

Muriel Rukeyser

*In the end, the poem is not a thing we see—
it is, rather, a light by which we may see—
and what we see is life.*

Robert Penn Warren



Poetry, in the past, was the center of our society, but
with modernity it has retreated to the outskirts.

I think the exile of poetry is also the exile
of the best of humankind.

Octavio Paz

But, the natural world is the old river that runs
through everything, and I think poets will
forever fish along its shores.

Mary Oliver

For rhyme the rudder is of verses, With which,
like ships they steer their courses.

Samuel Butler

Poetry is not a profession, it is a destiny.

Mikhail Dudan

He who draws noble delights from sentiments of poetry
is a true poet, though he has never written
a line in all his life.

George Sand

Everywhere I go I find that a poet has been there before me.

Sigmund Freud



Come, read to me some poem,
Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling,
And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,
Not from the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
Through the corridors of Time.

Read from some humbler poet,
Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start;

Who, through long days of labor,
And nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in his soul the music
Of wonderful melodies.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

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*Poetry has soothed the mind, lifted the spirit and
inspired man to greatness since thought began.*

*It is the song of the season,
the chill of the air, the vision of hope.*

*It is the inescapable meadow into which
we run when we have something to say,
some way to feel, some song to sing, someone to be.*

*Poetry has filled our lives with meaning
and passion for as long as words have been words,
nay, longer, for as long as images have been
constructed and choreographed
into new forms, new insight, new realities.*

*It is the condensation of thought and action and vision
to the most basic element which is life itself.*

*In it, truth is communicated in the only way
it can possibly be communicated
and in a way we cannot possibly live without.*

For that is poetry.

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