**Poetry**

**Poetry is better understood in the verse of the artist than in the prose of the critic. *(Matthew Arnold)***

**How these authors magnify their office – one dishonest plumber does more harm than a hundred poet-asters! *(Augustine Birrell)***

**In the winter of 1861, the second editor in chief of The Atlantic, James T. Fields, received a letter from Julia Ward Howe, the abolitionist and suffragist. Attached to her letter was a poem she hoped to see published in this magazine. Howe had just written her poem in a fever burst at the Willard Hotel. “I awoke in the gray of the morning twilight,” she later said, “and as I lay waiting for the dawn, the long lines of the desired poem began to twine themselves in my mind.” Fields, in possession of that most crucial editing skill – knowing when to leave copy alone – gave it a title and published “Battle Hymn of the Republic” on the first page of the February 1862 edition. (Howe received, in return, a $5 freelance fee and immortality.) *(Jeffrey Goldberg, in The Atlantic magazine)***

**For a man to become a poet he must be in love, or miserable. *(Lord Byron)***

**There ain’t nothing so easy to write as poetry – if you know how. *(Josh Billings)***

**The business of the poet is not to hold a cracked mirror up to nature. *(Oliver St. John Gregory)***

**By failing to read or listen to poets, society dooms itself to inferior modes of articulation, those of the politician, the salesman, or the charlatan. *(Joseph Brodsky)***

**Poetry is just the evidence of life. If your life is burning well, poetry is just the ash. *(Leonard Cohen, musician)***

**A poem is a composition in verse whose writer can’t make dollars out of it, and whose reader can’t make sense out of it. (Evan Esar, in 20,000 Quips & Quotes)**

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**If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can ever warm me, I know that is poetry. (Emily Dickinson)**

**When I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off – that is poetry. (Emily Dickinson)**

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**The only really difficult thing about a poem is the critic’s explanation of it. (Frank Moore Colby)**

**The real difficulty about writing poetry is filling up the other twenty-three hours of the day. (Virgil Thomson)**

**The chief difficulty with modern poetry is not so much the poetry itself as what is written about it. (Louis Untermeyer)**

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*With the so-called modern poets, a dislocated world demands a dislocated poem to describe it. ((Oliver St. John Gogarty)**

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*No vers is libre for the man who wants to do a good job. (T. S. Eliot)**

**What stimulates me to write a poem is that I have got something inside me that I want to get rid of – it is almost a kind of defecation. (T. S. Eliot)**

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*Even when some poets put all their brains into poetry, it comes out as blank verse. (Evan Esar, in 20,000 Quips & Quotes)**

**The evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred in their poems. (Evan Esar, in 20,000 Quips & Quotes)**

**Who was the first president to invite a poet to read at his inauguration? John F. Kennedy. Kennedy invited Robert Frost to read at the occasion of his inaugural. The eighty-six-old poet from New England had written a special work called “Dedication” specifically for the event. However, the glare from the sun made it difficult for Frost to see his text. Instead, he recited “The Gift Outright” from memory. Afterward, he sent a handwritten copy of the poem to the Smithsonian. *(Amy Pastan, in The Smithsonian Book of Presidential Trivia, p. 78)***

**Poetry is like fish: if it’s fresh, it’s good; if it’s stale, it’s bad; and if you’re not certain, try it on the cat. (Osbert Sitwell)**

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*A poem begins with a lump in the throat. (Robert Frost)**

**The writers of free verse got their idea from incorrect proof pages. (Robert Frost)**

**If left in its own tendencies, I believe poetry would exclude everything but love and the moon. (Robert Frost)**

**Poetry provides the one permissible way of saying one thing and meaning another. (Robert Frost)**

**Once in a while I meet someone who has read me; it did him good – I mean it served him right. (Robert Frost)**

**The ear is the only true writer and the only true reader of poetry. (Robert Frost)**

**A true sonnet goes eight lines and then takes a turn for better or worse, and goes six or eight lines more. (Robert Frost)**

**Tell them I Am, Jehovah said; and I have taken that as a command to iamb and not write free verse. (Robert Frost)**

**Poetry is a way of taking life by the throat. (Robert Frost)**

**How about a movement to steer all the free versifiers to a country as free in name as Liberia? (Robert Frost)**

**Like a piece of ice on a hot stove, a poem must ride on its on melting. (Robert Frost)**

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**Poetry is a gift; maybe that’s why you can’t sell it. (Evan Esar, in 20,000 Quips & Quotes)**

**Note to Young Pilgrims on the Path: You have been given a great gift – the gift of life – an opportunity to be here at this time in history, in this place, in the midst of all that is, both visible and invisible. Your true task is to live in such a way as to be worthy of this gift. Envisage your gift as a privilege and a responsibility. (Charles S. Pinzino, in Like Sunlight Falling into Water, p. 61)**

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*Their poems resemble a glass of tepid lemonade in which a couple of teaspoonfuls of Matthew Arnold have been dissolved. (Edith Sitwell)**

**I also find it interesting that humans are the one that God gave the free will to and look what we have done. (Nancy McCormick)**

**All that is worth remembering of life is the poetry of it. (William Hazlitt)**

**I like writing **poetry**, and I am often asked to come up with a poem on special occasions. When Neil, a colleague at the school where I teach, retired, another teacher suggested that I read an original poem at his retirement party. I agreed and then said, “Why don't you say a few words about Neil at the party also?” “Oh, no,” she quickly replied. “I don't like to stand up in front of people and make a fool of myself.” “You just told me to get up and make a fool of myself!” I reminded her. “Yes," she said, “but you're so good at it.” (Pat Hughes, in Reader's Digest)**

**Both the old idea of rhymed verse turned out to measure, and the new idea of free verse turned out to grass, are equally erroneous. (Stephen Leacock)**

**If it were not for poetry, few men would ever fall in love. (La Rochefoucauld)**

**Ignorance is one of the sources of poetry. (Wallace Stevens)**

**Poetry is the impish attempt to paint the color of the wind. (Maxwell Bodenheim)**

**Inside every man there is a poet who died young. (Stefan Kanfer)**

**If poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves to a tree, it had better not come at all. (John Keats)**

**Poetry is a language that tells us something which cannot be said. (Evan Esar, in 20,000 Quips & Quotes)**

**There are three kinds of limericks: limericks when ladies are present, limericks when ladies are absent but clergymen are present, and limericks. (Don Marquis)**

**When a man ceases to write poetry, he has probably married the girl. (Evan Esar, in 20,000 Quips & Quotes)**

**Poetry is what Milton saw when he went blind. (Don Marquis)**

**There’s more truth than poetry in some poetry. (Evan Esar, in 20,000 Quips & Quotes)**

**Poetry is news from the frontiers of consciousness. (Lawrence Ferlinghetti, poet)**

**There’s no money in poetry, but then there’s no poetry in money either. *(Robert Graves, English poet)***

**His poetry possesses all possible virtues and only one fault: it is dead. *(Heine)***

**The Constitution protects free speech, but only the American sense of humor protects free verse. (Evan Esar, in 20,000 Quips & Quotes)**

**People who are knowledgeable about poetry sometimes discuss it in that knowing, rather hateful way in which oenophiles talk about wine: robust, delicate, muscular. This has nothing to do with how most of us experience it, the heart coming around the corner and unexpectedly running into the mind. Of all the words that have stuck to the ribs of my soul, poetry has been the most filling. *(Anna Quindlen, in New York Times)***

**A beautiful line of verse has twelve feet, and two wings. *(Jules Renard)***

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*Count reminiscences like money. *(Carl Sandburg, in Complete Poems)***

**Poetry is the opening and closing of a door, leaving those who look through to guess about what was seen during a moment. (*Carl Sandburg)***

**Poetry is an echo, asking a shadow to dance. (*Carl Sandburg)***

**Poetry is a search for syllables to shoot at the barriers of the unknown and the unknowable. (*Carl Sandburg)***

**Poetry is the achievement of the synthesis of hyacinths and biscuits. (*Carl Sandburg)***

**Poetry is a series of explanations of life, fading into horizons too swift for explanations. (*Carl Sandburg)***

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**I don’t like to boast, but I have probably skipped more poetry than any other person of my age and weight in this country. *(Will Cuppy)***

**Wine is bottled poetry. *(Robert Louis Stevenson)***

**Think you if Laura has been Petrarch’s wife, he would have written sonnets all his life? *(Lord Byron)***

**I like to think of poetry as statements made on the way to the grave. *(Dylan Thomas)***

**If you can understand it, it’s verse; if you can’t understand it, it’s poetry. (Evan Esar, in 20,000 Quips & Quotes)**

**Poets untie writing and then tie it up again differently. *(Jean Cocteau)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**All bad poetry springs from genuine feeling. *(Oscar Wilde)***

**There are two ways of disliking poetry: one way is to dislike it, the other is to read Pope. *(Oscar Wilde)***

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**In a poem the words should be as pleasing to the ear as the meaning is to the mind. (Marianne Moore)**

**Poetry is boned with ideas, nerved and blooded with emotions, all held together by the delicate, tough skin of words. (Paul Engle)**

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**Poetry has never brought me in enough to buy shoestrings. *(William Wordsworth)***

**You will not find poetry anywhere unless you bring some of it with you. *(Joubert)***

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