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# Quotes about Poetry and Poets

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A poem records emotions and moods that lie beyond normal language, that can only be patched together and hinted at metaphorically.

- Ackerman, Diane

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

- Aristotle

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

- Aristotle

Written poetry is worth reading once, and then should be destroyed. Let the dead poets make way for others. Then we might even come to see that it is our veneration for what has already been created, however beautiful and valid it may be, that petrifies us.

- Artaud, Antonin

There is the view that poetry should improve your life. I think people confuse it with the Salvation Army.

- Ashbery, John

I cannot accept the doctrine that in poetry there is a suspension of belief. A poet must never make a statement simply because it sounds poetically exciting; he must also believe it to be true.

- Auden, W. H.

It is a sad fact about our culture that a poet can earn much more money writing or talking about his art than he can by practicing it.

- Auden, W. H.

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

- Auden, W. H.

Rhymes, meters, stanza forms, etc., are like servants. If the master is fair enough to win their affection and firm enough to command their respect, the result is an orderly happy household. If he is too tyrannical, they give notice; if he lacks authority, they become slovenly, impertinent, drunk and dishonest.

- Auden, W. H.

As a poet there is only one political duty, and that is to defend one's language against corruption. When it is corrupted, people lose faith in what they hear and this leads to violence.

- Auden, W. H.

The poets did well to conjoin music and medicine, because the office of medicine is but to

tune the curious harp of man's body.

- Bacon, Francis

I've read some of your modern free verse and wonder who set it free.

- Barrymore, John

Who among us has not, in moments of ambition, dreamt of the miracle of a form of poetic prose, musical but without rhythm and rhyme, both supple and staccato enough to adapt itself to the lyrical movements of our souls, the undulating movements of our reveries, and the convulsive movements of our consciences? This obsessive ideal springs above all from frequent contact with enormous cities, from the junction of their innumerable connections.

- Baudelaire, Charles

Poetry and progress are like two ambitious men who hate one another with an instinctive hatred, and when they meet upon the same road, one of them has to give place.

- Baudelaire, Charles

Any healthy man can go without food for two days -- but not without poetry.

- Baudelaire, Charles

The fact that there are so many weak, poor and boring stories and novels written and published in America has been ascribed by our rebels to the horrible squareness of our institutions, the idiocy of power, the debasement of sexual instincts, and the failure of

writers to be alienated enough. The poems and novels of these same rebellious spirits, and their theoretical statements, are grimy and gritty and very boring too, besides being nonsensical, and it is evident by now that polymorphous sexuality and vehement declarations of alienation are not going to produce great works of art either.

- Bellow, Saul

Poetry is the impish attempt to paint the color of the wind.

- Bodenheim, Maxwell

In the works of the better poets you get the sensation that they're not talking to people any more, or to some seraphical creature. What they're doing is simply talking back to the language itself --as beauty, sensuality, wisdom, irony --those aspects of language of which the poet is a clear mirror. Poetry is not an art or a branch of art, it's something more. If what distinguishes us from other species is speech, then poetry, which is the supreme linguistic operation, is our anthropological, indeed genetic, goal. Anyone who regards poetry as an entertainment, as a read, commits an anthropological crime, in the first place, against himself.

- Brodsky, Joseph

If a poet has any obligation toward society, it is to write well. Being in the minority, he has no other choice. Failing this duty, he sinks into oblivion. Society, on the other hand, has no obligation toward the poet. A majority by definition, society thinks of itself as having other options than reading verses, no matter how well written. Its failure to do so results in its sinking to that level of locution at which society falls easy prey to a demagogue or a tyrant. This is society's own equivalent of oblivion.

- Brodsky, Joseph

Poetry is life distilled.

- Brooks, Gwendolyn

As to Don Juan, confess that it is the sublime of that there sort of writing; it may be bawdy, but is it not good English? It may be profligate, but is it not life, is it not the thing? Could any man have written it who has not lived in the world? and tooled in a post-chaise? in a hackney coach? in a Gondola? against a wall? in a court carriage? in a vis a vis? on a table? and under it?

- Byron, Lord

Poetry should only occupy the idle.

- Byron, Lord

I by no means rank poetry high in the scale of intelligence --this may look like affectation but it is my real opinion. It is the lava of the imagination whose eruption prevents an earthquake.

- Byron, Lord

An age which is incapable of poetry is incapable of any kind of literature except the cleverness of a decadence.

- Chandler, Raymond

Poetry reveals to us the loveliness of nature, brings back the freshness of youthful feelings, reviews the relish of simple pleasures, keeps unquenched the enthusiasm which warmed the springtime of our being, refines youthful love, strengthens our interest in human nature, by vivid delineations of its tenderest and softest feelings, and through the brightness of its prophetic visions, helps faith to lay hold on the future life.

- Channing, William Ellery

Poetry is the utterance of deep and heart-felt truth -- the true poet is very near the oracle.

- Chapin, Edwin Hubbel

Little do such men know the toil, the pains, the daily, nightly racking of the brains, to range the thoughts, the matter to digest, to cull fit phrases, and reject the rest.

- Churchill, Charles

Poetry is indispensable --if I only knew what for.

- Cocteau, Jean

Such is the role of poetry. It unveils, in the strict sense of the word. It lays bare, under a light which shakes off torpor, the surprising things which surround us and which our senses record mechanically.

- Cocteau, Jean

I wish our clever young poets would remember my homely definitions of prose and poetry; that is, prose = words in their best order; --poetry = the best words in the best order.

- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor

That willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith.

- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor

To a poet, silence is an acceptable response, even a flattering one.

- Colette, Sidonie Gabrielle

It is with roses and locomotives (not to mention acrobats Spring electricity Coney Island the 4th of July the eyes of mice and Niagara Falls) that my poems are competing.

- Cummings, E.E. (Edward. E.)

If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry.

- Dickinson, Emily

Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those we have personality and emotion know what it means to want to escape from these things.

- Dickinson, Emily

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

- Diderot, Denis

The job of the poet is to render the world -- to see it and report it without loss, without perversion. No poet ever talks about feelings. Only sentimental people do.

- Doren, Mark Van

We read poetry because the poets, like ourselves, have been haunted by the inescapable tyranny of time and death; have suffered the pain of loss, and the more wearing, continuous pain of frustration and failure; and have had moods of unlooked-for release and peace. They have known and watched in themselves and others.

- Drew, Elizabeth

Poetry, the genre of purest beauty, was born of a truncated woman: her head severed from her body with a sword, a symbolic penis.

- Dworkin, Andrea

She opened up a book of poems and handed it to me written by an Italian poet from the 13th century and every one of them words rang true and glowed like burning coal pouring off of every page like it was written in my soul from me to you.

- Dylan, Bob

A poet in history is divine, but a poet in the next room is a joke.

- Eastman, Max

I would define the poetic effect as the capacity that a text displays for continuing to generate different readings, without ever being completely consumed.

- Eco, Umberto

Here undoubtedly lies the chief poetic energy: --in the force of imagination that pierces or exalts the solid fact, instead of floating among cloud-pictures.

- Eliot, George

When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experiences.

- Eliot, T. S.

We must believe that emotion recollected in tranquillity is an inexact formula. For it is neither emotion, nor recollection, nor without distortion of meaning, tranquillity. It is a concentration, and a new thing resulting from the concentration of a very great number of experiences which to the practical and active person would not seem to be experiences at all; it is a concentration which does not happen consciously or of deliberation. These experiences are not recollected and they finally unite in an atmosphere which is tranquil only in that it is a passive attending upon the event.

- Eliot, T. S.

It seems just possible that a poem might happen to a very young man: but a poem is not poetry --That is a life.

- Eliot, T. S.

I take as metaphysical poetry that in which what is ordinarily apprehensible only by thought is brought within the grasp of feeling, or that in which what is ordinarily only felt is transformed into thought without ceasing to be feeling.

- Eliot, T. S.

Each venture is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate with shabby equipment always deteriorating in the general mess of imprecision of feeling.

- Eliot, T. S.

It does not need that a poem should be long. Every word was once a poem. Every new relationship is a new word.

- Emerson, Ralph Waldo

Only poetry inspires poetry.

- Emerson, Ralph Waldo

Painting was called silent poetry and poetry speaking painting.

- Emerson, Ralph Waldo

Poetry must be as new as foam and as old as the rock.

- Emerson, Ralph Waldo

Sooner or later that which is now life shall be poetry, and every fair and manly trait shall add a richer strain to the song.

- Emerson, Ralph Waldo

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

- Engle, Paul

Poetry is a mere drug, Sir.

- Farquhar, George

The writing of a poem is like a child throwing stones into a mineshaft. You compose first, then you listen for the reverberation.

- Fenton, James

A mighty good sausage stuffer was spoiled when the man became a poet.

- Field, Eugene

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

- Fitzgerald, Robert

Of all great poems, love is the absolute and essential foundation.

- Fitzhugh, C.

All one's inventions are true, you can be sure of that. Poetry is as exact a science as geometry.

- Flaubert, Gustave

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

- Fowles, John

Poetry is a way of taking life by the throat.

- Frost, Robert

A poem begins as a lump in the throat, a sense of wrong, a homesickness, a lovesickness. It finds the thought and the thought finds the words.

- Frost, Robert

I would as soon write free verse as play tennis with the net down.

- Frost, Robert

A poem begins in delight and ends in wisdom.

- Frost, Robert

Poetry is what is lost in translation.

- Frost, Robert

Writing free verse is like playing tennis with the net down.

- Frost, Robert

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. It has the virtue of being able to say twice as much as prose in half the time, and the drawback, if you do not give it your full attention, of seeming to say half as much in twice the time.

- Fry, Christopher

Just as a new scientific discovery manifests something that was already latent in the order of nature, and at the same time is logically related to the total structure of the existing science, so the new poem manifests something that was already latent in the order of words.

- Frye, Northrop

Between religion's this is and poetry's but suppose this is, there must always be some kind of tension, until the possible and the actual meet at infinity.

- Frye, Northrop

I don't know a better preparation for life than a love of poetry and a good digestion.

- Gale, Zona

Poetry is not an expression of the party line. It's that time of night, lying in bed, thinking what you really think, making the private world public, that's what the poet does.

- Ginsberg, Allen

I have a new method of poetry. All you got to do is look over your notebooks... or lay down on a couch, and think of anything that comes into your head, especially the miseries. Then arrange in lines of two, three or four words each, don't bother about sentences, in sections of two, three or four lines each.

- Ginsberg, Allen

If there's no money in poetry, neither is there poetry in money.

- Graves, Robert

Poetry is emotion put into measure. The emotion must come by nature, but the measure can be acquired by art.

- Hardy, Thomas

The poetry from the eighteenth century was prose; the prose from the seventeenth century was poetry.

- Hare, David

Poetry is the key to the hieroglyphics of nature.

- Hare, David

The essence of poetry is will and passion.

- Hazlitt, William

Poetry is the universal language which the heart holds with nature and itself. He who has a contempt for poetry, cannot have much respect for himself, or for anything else.

- Hazlitt, William

The poetical impression of any object is that uneasy, exquisite sense of beauty or power that cannot be contained within itself; that is impatient of all limit; that (as flame bends to flame) strives to link itself to some other image of kindred beauty or grandeur; to enshrine itself, as it were, in the highest forms of fancy, and to relieve the aching sense of pleasure by expressing it in the boldest manner.

- Hazlitt, William

The man is either mad, or he is making verses.

- Horace

No poems can please for long or live that are written by water-drinkers.

- Horace

Every old poem is sacred.

- Horace

Poets wish to profit or to please.

- Horace

No verse can give pleasure for long, nor last, that is written by drinkers of water.

- Horace

A person born with an instinct for poverty.

- Hubbard, Elbert

A good poet's made as well as born.

- Johnson, Ben

You will not find poetry anywhere unless you bring some of it with you.

- Joubert, Joseph

Poetry, even when apparently most fantastic, is always a revolt against artifice, a revolt, in a sense, against actuality.

- Joyce, James

In science one tries to tell people, in such a way as to be understood by everyone, something that no one ever knew before. But in poetry, it's the exact opposite.

- Kafka, Franz

Inside every man there is a poet who died young.

- Kanfer, Stephan

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.

- Keats, John

Poetry should surprise by a fine excess and not by singularity --it should strike the reader as a wording of his own highest thoughts, and appear almost a remembrance.

- Keats, John

When power leads man towards arrogance, poetry reminds him of his limitations. When power narrows the area of man's concern, poetry reminds him of the richness and diversity of existence. When power corrupts, poetry cleanses.

- Kennedy, John F.

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

- Lamartine, Alphonse De

Prose on certain occasions can bear a great deal of poetry; on the other hand, poetry sinks and swoons under a moderate weight of prose.

- Landor, Walter Savage

The eye is the notebook of the poet.

- Lowell, James Russell

Perhaps no person can be a poet, or can even enjoy poetry, without a certain unsoundness of mind.

- Macaulay, Thomas B.

The poetic act consists of suddenly seeing that an idea splits up into a number of equal motifs and of grouping them; they rhyme.

- Mallarme, Stephane

There is only beauty -- and it has only one perfect expression -- poetry. All the rest is a lie --except for those who live by the body, love, and, that love of the mind, friendship. For me, Poetry takes the place of love, because it is enamored of itself, and because its sensual delight falls back deliciously in my soul.

- Mallarme, Stephane

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

- Marquis, Don

Poetry is what Milton saw when he went blind.

- Marquis, Don

Immature poets imitate, mature poets steal.

- Massinger, Philip

Poets are born, not paid.

- Mizner, Addison

It is easier to write an indifferent poem than to understand a good one.

- Montaigne, Michel Eyquem De

The courage of the poets is to keep ajar the door that leads into madness.

- Morley, Christopher

Poetry is the special medium of spiritual crazy wisdom, the form of expression that comes closest to creating a bridge between words and what is wordless.

- Nisker, Wes "Scoop"

The blood jet is poetry and there is no stopping it.

- Plath, Sylvia

Poetry comes nearer to vital truth than history.

- Plato

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

- Poe, Edgar Allan

A beautiful line of verse has twelve feet, and two wings.

- Renard, Jules

Spring has returned. The Earth is like a child that knows poems.

- Rilke, Rainer Maria

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

- Robertson, Frederick W.

Poetry is the exquisite expression of exquisite expressions.

- Roux, Joseph

Poetry is an echo, asking a shadow to dance.

- Sandburg, Carl

Poetry is the achievement of the synthesis of hyacinths and biscuits.

- Sandburg, Carl

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

- Sandburg, Carl

I have written some poetry that I don't understand myself.

- Sandburg, Carl

A poet is born not made.

- Saying

The greatest poem is not that which is most skillfully constructed, but that in which there is the most poetry.

- Schefer, L.

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

- Scott, Sir Walter

Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.

- Shelley, Percy Bysshe

Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds.

- Shelley, Percy Bysshe

The poet speaks to all men of that other life of theirs that they have smothered and forgotten.

- Sitwell, Dame Edith

Poetry is an art, the easiest to dabble in, but the hardest to reach true excellence.

- Stedman, Captain J. G.

The poet is the priest of the invisible.

- Stevens, Wallace

No one ever was a great poet, that applied himself much to anything else.

- Temple, Sir William

Poetry implies the whole truth, philosophy expresses only a particle of it.

- Thoreau, Henry David

Good poetry seems too simple and natural a thing that when we meet it we wonder that all men are not always poets. Poetry is nothing but healthy speech.

- Thoreau, Henry David

War talk by men who have been in a war is always interesting; whereas moon talk by a poet who has not been in the moon is likely to be dull.

- Twain, Mark

Poetry is either something that lives like fire inside you --like music to the musician or Marxism to the Communist --or else it is nothing, an empty formalized bore around which pedants can endlessly drone their notes and explanations.

- Unknown, Source

Poetry doesn't belong to those who write it, but to those who need it.

- Unknown, Source

A poem is never finished, only abandoned.

- Valery, Paul

It is as impossible to translate poetry as it is to translate music.

- Voltaire

Verses which do not teach men new and moving truths do not deserve to be read.

- Voltaire

This poem will never reach its destination. &#91;On Rousseau's Ode To Posterity&#93;

- Voltaire

A poet's pleasure is to withhold a little of his meaning, to intensify by mystification. He

unzips the veil from beauty, but does not remove it.

- White, Elwyn Brooks

A poet can survive anything but a misprint.

- Wilde, Oscar

But all art is sensual and poetry particularly so. It is directly, that is, of the senses, and since the senses do not exist without an object for their employment all art is necessarily objective. It doesn't declaim or explain, it presents.

- Williams, William Carlos

The poet gives us his essence, but prose takes the mold of the body and mind.

- Woolf, Virginia





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