

# Quotations about Poetry

**POEM.** N. AN ARRANGEMENT OF WORDS WRITTEN OR SPOKEN, TRADITIONALLY A RHYTHMICAL COMPOSITION, SOMETIMES RHYMED, EXPRESSING EXPERIENCES, IDEAS, OR EMOTIONS IN A STYLE MORE CONCENTRATED, IMAGINATIVE, AND POWERFUL THAN THAT OF ORDINARY SPEECH OR PROSE: SOME POEMS ARE IN METER, SOME IN FREE VERSE.

A poem begins in delight and ends in wisdom. – ROBERT FROST

**PROSE...words in their best order.**

**POETRY...the best words in the best order.** – SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

**Poetry is the art of uniting pleasure with truth.** – SAMUEL JOHNSON

*Poetry is the synthesis of hyacinths and biscuits.* – CARL SANDBURG

**POETRY IS AT BOTTOM A CRITICISM OF LIFE.** – MATTHEW ARNOLD

Poetry is the art of substantiating shadows, and of lending existence to nothing. – EDMUND BURKE

**Poetry is just the evidence of life. If your life is burning well, poetry is just the ash.** -- LEONARD COHEN

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

-- PAUL ENGLE

*Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings...recollected in tranquility.*  
– WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Poetry involves the mysteries of the irrational perceived through rational words.  
– VLADIMIR NABOKOV

All poetry is putting the infinite within the finite. – ROBERT BROWNING

**Always be a poet, even in prose.** -- CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

*I would define poetry as the rhythmical creation of beauty.* -- EDGAR ALLAN POE

**Poetry is what gets lost in translation.** – ROBERT FROST

If...it makes my whole body so cold no fire can ever warm me, I know that it is poetry. – EMILY DICKINSON

**The poet is liar who always speaks the truth.** – JEAN COCTEAU

**A poem should not mean, but be.** – ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

*You will not find poetry anywhere unless you bring some of it with you.* – JOSEPH JOUBERT

***Poetry is a series of explanations of life,  
fading off into horizons too swift for explanations.***

-- CARL SANDBURG

**POETRY IS A WAY OF TAKING LIFE BY THE THROAT.** -- ROBERT FROST

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

-- PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Poetry is the presentiment in musical form to the imagination,  
of noble grounds for the noble emotions. -- JOHN RUSKIN

**Poetry is a sequence of dots and dashes, spelling depths, crypts, cross-lights, and moon wisps.**

-- CARL SANDBURG

Poetry is fact given over to imagery. -- ROD MCKUEN

TALK WITH A LITTLE LUCK IN IT, THAT'S WHAT POETRY IS. -- WILLIAM STAFFORD

**POETRY IS A MARRIAGE OF CRAFT AND IMAGINATION.** -- CHRISTINE E. HEMP

*Poetry is a phantom script telling how rainbows are made and why they go away.* -- CARL SANDBURG

Out of the quarrel with others we make rhetoric;  
out of the quarrel with ourselves we make poetry. --W.B. YEATS

**Poetry is man's rebellion against being what he is.** -- JAMES BRANCH CABELL

A poem begins with a lump in the throat. -- ROBERT FROST

*Poetry is the opening and closing of a door, leaving those who look through to guess  
about what is seen during a moment.* -- CARL SANDBURG

*Poetry is a deal of joy and pain and wonder, with a dash of the dictionary.* --KAHLIL GIBRAN

**Imaginary gardens with real toads in them.** --MARIANNE MOORE

**A poem is never finished, only abandoned.** --PAUL VALÉRY

The poem is the point at which our strength gave out. --RICHARD ROSEN

Poetry is to philosophy what the Sabbath is to the rest of the week. --AUGUSTUS AND JULIUS HARE

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

--STEPHEN MALLARME

The only problem  
with Haiku is that you just  
get started and then

-- ROGER MCGOUGH