

AN
ON

What is Good Poetry?
(A Prose Reflection)

That's something I want you to ask yourself.
What makes good poetry "Good"?
No, I don't want to know that Professor X told you:
all that about verse form and syntax -
forget it!

What makes poetry good for you?
How can you recognize good poetry when you see it?
Is it good because it gets you and holds you?
Because it meets your mood
or opens your mind to notions
you'd not considered before?
or has a certain chime or gallop?

Is the good stuff only written by the masters -
those (mostly men)
who dominated our anthologies at school
and still show up at University?
How would those masters craft their work today?
Ode to Art Deco and the Microwave?
It's certain they'd have access to more words
to more allusions:
Wordsworth could tape his thoughts on moonlight walks;
Blake could print his on a Laser Jet
and Shakespeare take his laptop to the Globe

How can a poet of the nineties write for you?
Many have no guidance no advice
no praise, no fame, no recognition
no encouragement
no feedback from their words for good or ill;
they struggle on in vacuums
like flies entrapped
in sterile jars
deprived of all communication;
creative writing often springs from isolation

Should poets just express
or, by expressing, try to reach for you?
In the long run doesn't it boil down to
chacun a son gout? or
(are you still with me?)
Shouldn't everyone be open to the poet's touch?
Poets use the ordinary words
we all use - rigidly or loosely
to speak those truths we all experience.

Good poets make you laugh or cry
despair, remember:
they move you touch you
change you
if only for a little;
subject; imagery; style; all count -
but some combine them into strings that ring down
through the years
while others spend whole lifetimes re-arranging them
in useless blocks

Good poems
state truth well - there is no doubt
but there are lines
that sometimes hit you right between the eyes
that stun
and you re-read repeat and memorize
and carry them around as mental sustenance;
you make those certain words your own:
to roam around your mind
and hammer out their melodies
each time you recognize a truth
which they reflect;
those fragment sentences are more than good -
they're simply great

Pam- Fly in the Bottle - Fulton

LITERARY

Stranger to My Soul

Shivering; silently captured
in untold secrets.
Shakings slithering towards
an open door.

Trespassing; tiptoeing across
my own open field.
Teasing; tickling with untame
joy of letting go.

Ready; rising to share
gift-wrapped messages.
Risking; Racing heart ready
to be exposed.

Alone; aching hiddenly for
much too long.
Anchoring; awaking to acceptance
of sharing with another heart.

New; nestling dreams become
my very hope.
Nearing; naked soul soon to be
a frightening reality.

Grasping; gallowing as my
destination nears.
Giving; gleaming light shines through
the open door.

Eeery; echoing self-taught
voice invades again.
Easing; entrance of refreshment
Seems too near.

Reaching; round door handle stares
before my tempting eyes.
Resting uneasy; feeling soul spinning, I
quickly shut the door close.

Deborah Ruth Wilton

The Beach

The life on the beach
Begins in darkness
It is deserted and very peaceful.
Day breaks and people arrive
They get their suntans,
Play their games,
And have their fun.
Sunsets and the people leave
Deserted again and very peaceful
The birds return
And life continues
The people did not even notice

Geoff (Compact) Millen