

# What Is Poetry?

Poetry is the super-distillation of human experience made to discover and create beauty in life. It is also the expressway to truth. It is the most human and sublime of the written expressions. Man is born with poetry, but it is generally suppressed by the ways of the world and the struggle to survive. It is a man of imagination who keeps it alive, even at the cost of pain, to enrich his existence. Poetry is the hope of a settling calm in the midst of a turbulent storm, the courage of conviction when the world is against one's cause, the dance of the imagination when in the lap of nature, rapture at the end of the road to the truth, and the beating of the heart when enwrapped in loneliness. It is the product of human reason but not bound by it.

The industrial-commercial era has squeezed out a good bit of poetry in human life. With the weakening of the family, rise of individualism, cut-throat economic competition, loneliness, gaining of chemically stimulated euphoria, inhuman pace of living, unbridled commercialism, and the spread of nihilism, human life has been rendered desolate and barren, with a lot of creative comforts, but stuffed with hollowness and reeking with selfish cynicism. Man has gained the political and economic bill of rights (though not in every country) but has lost his soul's inner bill of rights. (The two do not have to be mutually exclusive)

But poetry of human heart cannot remain frozen too long. It is the necessary ingredient for the survival of mind, as breath is for body. An age is known for quality of poetry it has created. Beyond the problems of food, disease, and oil, mankind is dependent on the quality of mental life its members live. Poetry is the invisible compass of mankind.

Poems are excerpts from a longer, unfinished, and an unfinishable poem called

Life. A poem is the result of a life-long quest to find the essence of life; an attempt to break through insane barriers, and bypass vulgarities of worldly life to touch the shores of freedom and truth.

A poem is an attempt to reach the essence of the object of its attention; to grasp reality and feel the pulse of eternity.

Suffern, New York, Orig: 3.16.97 (Preface to the book, Meditation on Time); Rev: 12.26.10; Rev. 7.27.16