

[This is a book for all ages. If you like these verses, you will like the entire book.]

P. 4

Kids love to get praise from their sisters and brothers.
They need it even more from their fathers and mothers!
Children need three major things each and every day;
A smile, a hug and humor to help them on their way.

P. 7

If your parents always have to feed your pet
And pay for every visit to the Vet,
You won't be accepting responsibility.
Your learning experience will be up a tree!

P. 11

Quality of life depends on what you ingest
Into your body and into your mind.
Don't allow yourself to establish bad habits
That will ruin health and gradually bind.

P. 13

When wonderful friends surround you,
They will give you lots of clout
True friends find a way to walk *in*
When everyone else walks *out*.

P. 15

No matter what happens to you in life,
You must stay in school!
Education is your key to success!
For you, school is cool.

P. 17

Money is only a means to an end;
It is not "the end" in itself.
King Midas turned everything into gold
And had nothing warm for himself!

P. 19

Some failure is a part of life.
Don't give up; try another time!
It takes a while to learn this truth:
"Not failure, but low aim's the crime."

P. 20

When you become angry, it's hard to think!
Take a quick break, or you'll sink in a wink.
Take a leisurely walk around the block.
When you return, have a heart to heart talk!

P. 24

Parents give children roots when they are young,
And they brush away tears when they cry.
But, as children mature into adults,
Parents must help them grow wings to fly!

P. 35

As you mature, you'll figure out what you want to be.
With an education, plans will work successfully.
If you think the right employment happens just by chance
Those who hire will pass you by without a second glance!

P. 40

Never, no never, should an unkind word
Fall from your lips by your mate to be heard!
You should be quite aware— right from the start
That your mate has a very tender heart.

P. 44

Instead of finding fault with folks,
Observe all the good that they do.
Sincerely compliment them, and
They'll try even harder for you!

P. 47

When you honor commitments, you're mature.
So, when you commit, stick to it!
If you say you'll do something for someone,
Be very sure that you do it!

P. 51

The speed that you go is not as important
As the direction you decide to take!
Successful people have a burning desire
To strive each day towards the goals that they make.

P. 55

Understanding you're a spirit child of God
Is fundamental and very essential.
And all of your God-given gifts and talents
Help accomplish your eternal potential.

P. 57

Hard work and *gratitude* should be included here,
Live a principle centered life and *balance* will appear!
"Accept responsibility," and "to yourself be true."
Internalize these principles, and they will work for you!

P. 62

Share God's light and truth with each sister and brother.
Do small acts of kindness and help one another.
Repent of your errors! That puts pain in the past!
Live each and every day as though it were your last.

P. 64

To many death is a concept
That elicits a chilling shudder, and more. . . .
Christ took the sting right out of death;
Now it's just like walking through an open door!

noblest subject is a failure if the wood cracks or the marble shatters. Poems are made out of *words*.

And poets are necessarily in love with words. As the poet W. H. Auden has put it:

... a poet is, before anything else, a person who is passionately in love with language... [his] is certainly the sign by which one recognizes whether a young man is potentially a poet or not. "Why do you want to write poetry?" If the young man answers: "I have important things to say," then he is not a poet. If he answers, "I like hanging around words listening to what they say," then maybe he is going to be a poet.*

The Chilean poet Pablo Neruda (1904–1973), winner of the Nobel Prize in literature in 1971, is even more enraptured with the magic of words:

It's the words that sing, they soar and descend... I bow to them... I love them, I cling to them, I run them down, I bite into them, I melt them down... I love words so much... The unexpected ones... The ones I wait for greedily or stalk unlit, suddenly, they drop... Vowels I love... They glitter like colored stones, they leap like silver fish, they are foam, thread, metal, dew... I run after certain words... They are so beautiful that I want to fit them all into my poem... I catch them in midflight, as they buzz past, I trap them, clean them, peel them, I set myself in front of the dish, they have a crystalline texture to me, vibrant, ivory, vegetable, oily, like fruit, like algae, like agates, like olives... And then I stir them, I shake them, I drink them, I gulp them down, I mash them, I garnish them, I let them go... I leave them in my poem like stalactites, like slivers of polished wood, like coals, pickings from a shipwreck, gifts from the waves... Everything exists in the word.[†]

So it seems is Eudora Welty, who in a television documentary told how her passion for words made them seem real objects: "Held in the mouth, the moon became a word. It had the roundness of a Concord grape."[‡]

Many poets have found their dictionary fascinating reading. "For several years," confessed Emily Dickinson, "my Lexicon—was my only companion." In his *Cantos* Ezra Pound quotes his friend Ford Madox Ford with approval:

... get a dictionary
and learn the meaning of words.

Many poets have told us that their poems started not with an idea but with a phrase or two that pleased them—phrases for which they then had to find the appropriate idea. This procedure, which will seem in reverse to most of us, is

* W. H. Auden, "Squares and Oblongs," in *Poets at Work*, ed. C. D. Abbott (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1948), p. 171.

† Pablo Neruda, *Memoirs*, translated by Hardie St. Martin (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), p. 53.

‡ Eudora Welty: One Writer's Beginnings," *The American Experience* (BBC, January 1989).

so common that the French poet Paul Valéry admitted that poets have more trouble finding ideas to fit their words than words to fit their ideas.

Poetry consists not so much in saying memorable things as in saying things memorably. The interplay of image and emotion is not yet poetry; without the word it would remain forever silent, unshared, locked in the core of the individual. The poets' job is to make out of words a machine that will transmit what is in their minds to the minds of others—a machine so finely built that those others will admire it at least as much for its own perfection as for the message it transmits.

To some, "machine" may seem too unpoetic a metaphor. And yet it was the poet William Carlos Williams who called a poem "a small (or large) machine made out of words." He was echoing what Valéry had already said more than once: "A poem is really a kind of machine for producing the poetic state of mind by means of words."

When poets are constructing one of their magic-machines, they are not so much *saying* something as *making* something out of words, just as a sculptor is making something out of stone; a painter, something out of shapes and colors; a composer, something out of sounds.

Much of our nonpoetic speech aims at communicating information. We say, "Jacksonville is five miles away," or "The room will cost sixty dollars a night." It does not matter what words we use provided the message is clear; we may forget the exact words once they have served their purpose. But poets care *how* they say what they say. "All the fun's in how you say a thing," said Robert Frost. Poets care about the sound and length of words, their suggestions, their rhythm when put together. They want to say something not only right for the occasion, but something that will keep forever. They are getting back, in short, to language as a kind of magic.

The words on pages 118–119 show us two kinds of diction. On the left-hand page we have words that are very much alive and have been so for centuries; these are the kinds of words the best poets will prefer to use. On the right-hand page we have words and combinations of words that may once have been part of the living language but have long since lost their vitality; these are the kinds of words good poets generally avoid.

"Moon, Sun, Sleep, Birds, Live" of Kenneth Patchen is like a working model of a poem, cut away to give us a vivid glimpse of the moving parts.

It might be hard to state the "meaning" of this page of poetry, in which the words of the title, dramatized by typography, stand out in a field of seven little poems. Around this composition is a frame of about a hundred words, some related by association of ideas. The page, capable of being read in many ways, seems to be notes for a meditation on existence and language, on words as expressing the basic realities of our lives. It is also a lesson in the language of poetry. The vocabulary it uses is taken from the best words available to the poet—nearly all are what Joseph Conrad called the "fresh usual words" and André Breton "*les mots sans rides*," the un wrinkled words. These have endured, as alive today as in Shakespeare's time. They are still the words we