

## **Sensible Poetry**

We live in challenging times. Why have I had no post for 5 days? Why does Mick Lynch sound so plausible? Have chickens gone on strike? (There is a shortage of eggs in Waitrose). Will England win the World Cup? Will it snow at Christmas?

Cwg is aware of the stresses under which we all live. We are also mindful that many u3a members are avid readers of poetry and like nothing more than going to bed early with a good verse anthology of favourite lines to offer comfort and help in getting to sleep when there is a power cut.

However we have been somewhat perturbed to discover that some of these well-loved favourites contain negative and irresponsible sentiments. We have therefore helpfully rewritten some contentious lines and/or provided a clear and positive critique in order to offer sense and support in a senseless world.

Remember: Shakespeare above all knew the value of being sensible. Think what befell all those silly young people in the woods at midsummer. Glamour, adventure and over-inflated self-belief have their place but look what happened to Mark Antony for example and Macbeth and Lear. None of them were sensible.

Below are some lines that now express a sensible approach to complex challenges.

*William Wordsworth*

I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vale and hill  
But it started raining  
So I came in.

*Robert Burns*

I am NOT like a Red red rose.  
Roses are so in your face.  
And when the suitor tires of them  
They are quite easy to replace.  
I am more like the lemon tree  
Which gives a lasting pleasure.  
If treated with apt caution  
We yield a citric treasure."

*T. S. Eliot*

A cold coming we had of it, alas...  
But no problem going back  
Thanks for the lovely jumper  
and the see-through plastic mac.  
Merry Xmas.

*Anon*

His eyes are blue  
His heart is true  
He promises the Earth.  
But be guided by Miss Austen...  
And check out what he's worth.

*Samuel Taylor Coleridge*

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan  
A stately pleasure-dome decree.  
The Council converted it into a 30 storey tower block  
With affordable housing,  
Retail opportunities on the ground floor  
And easy access to the station and buses.

*Ted Hughes*

October is marigold, and yet  
A glass half full of wine left out  
To the dark heaven all night,  
by dawn has dreamed a premonition  
Of ice across its.. ....

It is not sensible to leave out a glass of wine all night on the lawn. Someone might fall over it and hurt themselves. Particularly if they have had several glasses of wine.

*Robert Frost*

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveller, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could to where it bent into the undergrowth;  
Then took the other, (Oh no!!!)

Not sensible. The poet spent the rest of his life worrying about whether he had made a big mistake and missed a good opportunity. He subsequently caused millions of readers over the years to wonder about the same thing, losing sleep, becoming ill, having to take time off work and causing large amounts of self-doubt resulting in mental instability. Buy a 'Rough Guide' and do your homework before you set out.

*Walter De La Mare*

'Is there anybody there?' said the Traveller,  
Knocking on the moonlit door.....  
But no one descended to the Traveller.....  
(So) he suddenly smote on the door, even

Louder, and then he lifted his head:  
'Tell them I came', at which point someone answered,  
'Go round the back instead.'

*Andrew Marvell*

Had we but World enough and Time,  
This coyness Lady were no crime.....etc, etc  
But at my back I alwaies (sic) hear  
Times winged charriot (sic again) hurrying near.

Well, we've all heard that one before. They might have got away with this sort of argument in the C17th but these days such words suggest coercion which is now a criminal offence (along with staring at people on the Tube). It would have been better to have said,

'Of course my dream is to possess her  
But I will wait, there is no pressure'.

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