

ALBATROSS



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*"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends that plague thee thus!--
Why lookst thou so?"--With my crossbow
I shot the ALBATROSS.*

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Respite

There is a blank notebook between her thighs, all that is lost in voiceless translation. Outlined by pubic hair the bone of a poem emerges from depths I am familiar with, numbly probing for syllables that explain the dark. Turning back the covers

she smiles at me, not knowing I have endless lines that reach out like a rod gone crazy off the deep end of a pier I have only dreamed of.

Instructions

happen more fluently.
stop staying. go.
walk away

gracefully across the park.
no, not on the path. along the creek
maybe. bend, pick flowers.

no not those. the yellow ones
without names, the tiny yellow stars.
no, find some other

way of moving. above all
change nothing. a poem should
have transparent hands.

Untitled

i want you to
tell me again
the way you saw it

where you were and
the man with the knife
how his teeth

the green-eyed man

if you did not dream it
where are the wounds
if it did not happen
then why are you bleeding
like this

Shalimar

Sirens
waiting in the night
what innocent soul could love them
blue, a day ago I was blue
today I am the same
a short stroll to the Garden District
for tea

and then I will sit with you
upon the footstool of the Earth
silly, it is only temporary, this place
looking out upon, this torrential place
looking out upon: any eye can see darkness
any beautiful spirit cannot perpetually grieve
can anything be worthless
in the pure pink corridors of long afternoons
we are not as ugly as the mirror says
neither man nor woman in the faint glow
of dawn, our open mouths draw together
slightly touching as shooting stars
shower Africa and the universe
begins its morning ritual.

A.M.

Over the warmth on my shoulder,
light strikes west as I drive
south at seven. You're back
home, sleeping. If you were
the warmth that's missing
on my right, you'd tell
how the calves stand tall
under their long brown chunky mothers,
and nurse with their throats stretched back
and open muzzles pointed up.

It's level. All this pasture slants
downriver. One bare tree branches
like lead in gothic windows;
it blackens the west with jags
of shadow.

If my eyes were fine
enough, I'd see light spring east
from sunlet wood, branch out to me
over eastward grass, and spread
its twigs of brightness.

The shadow's black. Still black.
I see one-half a symmetry.
When you hold our child & cry for no
known reason, still
it's brightness branching
for me.

Harvests

I knew you wouldn't be here
In apple time;
I could feel it in the chill
Of the spring fog
That darkened the sedge around the marsh
And sent cold rivulets
Running down awakening branches
Of the cherry trees along the lake,

They reached out
Into the space that held you
Once in blossom days;
The wind blew something, knew
Something
And the bare branches felt it
Cold
In the wind.

The leaves knew, too.
I read it
There

Across the green pages
Of summer,
Which always carried the chill
Of the wet spring fog
In the passages marked with
You.

And now in the gathering time, the apples,
I see, are falling--
Not here, but in a far country
Fair in full harvest.

Here,
Besides me, instead of apples,
The earth gapes where roots
Once grew inside.

And I think around that void
Of you,
For I see you, from these ashes,
Transported,
With roots strong,
With leaves aflame,
Flourishing there
On higher ground
While the moist dirt around my feet
Here
Is ringed with salt.

Forgotten

Was it enough, that we could not agree
Whether once it had been two others,
Or ourselves. Our confusion was lava
Flecked with fire, pouring between us.

We were drawn together, but then rain
Fell on the heated rocks. We were all
Steam, and the cracks which open
In the earth began to open, and this

As if we did not expect it. At night
When the leopard blends into the black
And yellow foliage and the rain grinds
Into ice, we start in our sleeping

From the memory of that violent but subtle
Transformation, when the creature that
We were rose to the surface of the moon
And spread its wings to dry, floating

On the warm river of our blood, and we know
It rose, drawn into the blackness
And confusion of too few stars. It rose,
Leaving, it seems, nothing behind.

love letter to someone i should leave

if i left you now
drove past your blue ford
in the faculty lot,
past flamingo road, pine island,
through sawgrass, outlaws, dwarf
deer, panther
past shanty stores hawking bait
fish and beer,
parked in a clearing,
walked as far as i could into the brush,
swamp mud, mind empty, eyes moving
underwater, following a thin
black line

and if i stayed all night
with the summer lightning, deerfly
stings, snorts of alligators,
some time near dawn suddenly
the tips of my fingers would need
the inside curve of your ear.

or if i wasn't here
when you called, day after day,
and the passion cooled our tongues
in the middle of trying to love
someone else, your voice
would beat inside my skull: wings,
bells, a mantra pulling my thoughts
to you.

or if we passed with a nod
in the hall, discussed only the faults
of english textbooks, the quirks
of your students or mine,
if i never felt your arms around me,
the sweet slide of skin on skin,
in the 20th mile of a marathon
race, my legs would lock
tight as swollen wood and no hands
but yours could free them.

in the rock (laurel highlands trail run)

flying
 from jammed interstates
 all night malls
 beaches where sea turtle
 hatchlings crawl for the street
 confused by so much light,
 zigzagging their crushed bodies
 on my morning run
 hungry for
 hills
 forest
 silence
 that old danger in the blood:
 the eyes of animals
 at night
 alone
 a stranger's scent
 no guns
 or spotlights.
 now 50 miles into the run
 crouched away from rain
 and sleet in a rocky
 crevice meteor cracked
 in three faults the sky
 electrified,
 i know it's there
 too real
 breath in the crack
 above the ledge
 where i almost sit
 legs no longer
 able to bend
 a growl
 deep in spiked fur
 (my craving for unity
 like the craving for sleep
 in sub zero cold,
 the sinking calm
 in high seas
 after the third
 surfacing)

cold
 my teeth crack
 against each other
 i want fur
 around me arms
 tight
 in the dark warm
 underbelly
 of rock
 where eyes almost
 close the hum
 of breath
 against the harsh
 consonants
 of my teeth
 curled
 as if dead
 or unborn
 i could be
 rolled like a worm
 infested log
 inside the rock
 food for the long
 night skin easy
 as soft fruit
 here death
 is just a falling
 down transient
 rerouting
 of the pathways
 of ants
 oasis of feed
 for buzzards raccoon
 scavenger beetles
 unnamed
 on the forest floor

but
spotlights
mens' voices
deliverers from
the rock
slow miles to the clearing
too late to go on.
in the forest
rain stops
with the first stars
a bear
climbs
out of a rock
shakes off
his wet fur
like an old coat,
dances on
a stranger's scent
in the moonlight.

The Sorriest of Second Comings

I have heard the echo of my own father's voice
in an empty but holy house and listened
to what was lost when telephone wires led nowhere
but to a home where my wayward heart once escaped.
But now, under the arrest of memory, I call to you
like death for help, as if some bail might free
a prodigal promise from this cell of mirrors,
and curse my misconception for all it was worth.
I have lived long lives in the many villages of misery,
slept in beds with flowers and watched them die
as women will come and go in the season of night,
their scent of sin always never too sweet.
Passion is the grail of fools I said once
safe and secure in some dream within some dream
Having like a pauper spent my use of possibility
looking for a way out of the only story I knew,
I would travel homeward a blindman
feeling for him along the braille streets of bitterness
That his words might echo my own and arrive
in any agreement we might offer to our day and age
That we like strong white oaks might
reach for the moon in a hemisphere beyond ourselves
As moss tangled monuments in evening sun
guard the garden where time creeps
like a serpent through damp dark hours to find
in the foliage of earth's honest womb some easy holy sleep.
Father, I wish I did not know this knowledge
But if this is what it takes to know you
Feel for me: I die too, a phantom driving forever
Southbound in a broken sun-rusted automobile
The pages of my Bible torn and given to the breeze
And I in this purgatory of a time that has changed us.

Turning Thirty

The night I turned twenty my girl
lit candles stuck in chocolate cupcakes
and I sealed the wishes
we granted and granted white snow
ticked on the window. We woke to the pristine
needles of a new day, the cockcrow
of the year Nixon saved me from the draft,
my mother's cancer began warping her face,
the year that girl and I visited grief on each other.
Ten years later, a toothbrush stuck in my face,
I inspected myself in the bathroom mirror,
hoping for more than the customary signs --
the unrolling jowls, the eyelids thickening
under the jut of familial brow --
hoping for the fire of first things,
the return of desire's charged filaments.
Yes I stood there wanting not to want
anything but what I saw, not the precarious
ferocity of new sex, nor the certainties
of baseball and my own intelligence
but a man standing before himself,
having seen death jig in his mother's eyes,
having seen his own doings fall to pieces,
cleaning himself up for the day's work.

After Grandmother's Third Surgery

she began to walk in the peach orchard
and to sit in the arbor for hours.
We saw her rub her hands
over the rough wood of the barn,
ignoring splinters we later lifted.
Even before April, she felt Spring
and tilted her face to rainshowers.
She often cupped blossoms in her palms
and whistled back at the birds.
But the storms --
she watched the storms from inside
behind kitchen curtains,
and when lightning struck the oak
she planted as a bride,
she nodded as it fell.

The Life

Mainly flesh,
with pliant
spine,
you are the
pond's
dark habit.
Sliding
through glossy
silence,
you graze
on the small
and green.

Avoiding the
bellies of
bottom-stones
you tend
your shadow --
that brown
gauze in
which you
drowse,
that darkness
which
describes you.

Guarding
your snug
life,
you sometimes
huddle
in mud,
hidden from
the heron
who aims
for your heart.

Woven the Grasses

The plumage the palmetto sending
Light southward
A flower that must be carried on
Long journeys through the chest
And night washing the table where I sit
Released from a small boat
This house in flight then underwater
Underneath the storks flying darkly
Bending into thin air and swallowed
Grow a bird becoming deep
Red on this high ledge of summer perched
Grow for me some shadowy life
Atop the blasted pine roaming
Woven the grasses
Grown compact and fragrant
A grove sending
Light southward

Flight (Song for Frances)

With night shape of a crescent or belfrey
two feet above ground her dream is travelling
Carried through calendars to green water
one night lowers the century roots
for her
Between humidity and starfall
the coming of moss to evening branch
For her the wells are filled with air and sparrows
The ship saddened into depths of miles
returns
Beneath one hundred bells
petal and droplet and dream
of Frances

Houseplants

Plants wilt in indirect light.
Heat-eaten and weary.
They have set their heavy reasons down.
All empty-armed now,
almost heaving like old men
in a murderous sun.
I give them water
but they still give up.
A certain kind of light in them is gone.
They are children without stories.
I speak to them
but they don't even raise their eyes.
Perhaps they listen to some other voice,
one that calls from another place,
and the only way to get there
is to fade.

The way a woman disappears into her children;
a soft, lonely kind of love.

Hunger

All my animals come: fawn and tiger
to the edge of water.
Silent, numerous, each one
stalking the light to its end.

Cursed as shades they come
for your body on the wind.
Proud of their hunger.
They will clean your bones
for a white altar,
knowing you will be born again.

What does it matter if far away we hear
serious men cutting stone.

Notes

There are days when I, too,
Do as little as dig, or fatten
Among chrysanthemums, when

My stay seems as mundane
And even raiment weighs
Like a sarcophagus more mud.

Yet, I may at a whim
Step out into the sugars
Of jasmine, or drift

And drift to the orioles,
Unlike moles--their tithe
To worlds: to excavate and eat.

Delicate legends. They never quite are,
But scuff cramped canals
Dreaming the dark forever.

Dragonflies

Having established, patrolled and defended
Territory as do birds,
The male dragonfly mounts the female midair
And coupled, they flit over water surface
To favored pondside, he clinging to weedy stem,
She to him, head-down, slender
Ends of bodies touching at two places,
Motionless, shiny wings horizontal, at rest
All day as if held in a posture of death,
The endless embrace
Before nightfall and separation.

Swamp

It took the lift of the head of a snake
And a line of bubbles trailing a tortoise shell
To pull him like a compass tip
To where the speckled pintail
Floated her rope of puffballs
In through a twist of twigs.
He almost caught then something in the wind,
Sensed it like an odour not quite there.
He did not hold back the impulse:
After fifteen years of turning toward the drive
He changed direction,
Headed straight into the swamp.
He axed and dragged out naive trees
Set the spring and tightness of them straight
Past the cattail, beyond the arum's arrowhead
Toward the thing he was only beginning to realize
That water and winds
And birds and frogs and fish knew all along.

A Field of Millet

Standing in a field of millet,
I shoot a dove as it flies
Out of the field to drink
In Flint Creek.
When I come to the dove,
Its broken left wing beats
The ground. Its breast and neck
Are flecked with blood.
Though I hate to do it,
I pick up the dove, push
Its head backward
And break its neck.
I drop it in the field.
When I think I had to kill
the dove with my hands
To make it real,
I can't hunt anymore.
These doves in my bag
I don't dress. I bury them
In my backyard. I throw
The bag into Lake Shepherd.
I drink whiskey and warm water.
For dinner I have soup and bread.

*An Old Well On My Uncle's Farm With the New Cement Block Farmhouse
In Georgia*

The rope reddens my hands.
It has slipped back two times.
The bucket on the end
is resisting
leaving the darkness.
I am an anachronism;
I should be turning
the bright new faucet
in the new electric kitchen.

I tighten my shoulders.
The bucket comes up
to be balanced
on greenish old boards.
I visualize your body
tremulous
in a circle of wood
secured
by bands of bronze.
You walk among
the yellowish eyes
of white butterflies.
Rain falls,
your body within a circle
becomes circles with centers,
circles spreading
and disappearing into oblivion.
The visualization
has become geometry,
evanescent and non-sensuous.
The board cracks, collapses;
the bucket falls back
to the square dark mirror
of the bottom
that reflects only
a darkened version
of my face.

The Houses That Jack Built

Jack, wild rose petals
fell like drops of blood
on the child-clear creek.

You cemented it in
to build houses.

Jack, an ancient magnolia tree
burst with ripe moons
spewing divine incense.

You chopped it down
to build houses.

We buried the furred, the winged
in peppermint graves
greener than hope.

You bulldozed the earth
to build houses.

A sugared baby animal
now roasts on your patio.
You throw an empty beer can
in target practice, over the fence.
You cheer as the field mouse drops.
She does not understand,
reeling, struggling
to carry home food
-- your pellets of poison.

The only shade of the afternoon
is the smoke of burning flesh.

Jack, the family,
the family plot
is fouled.

Speaking in Tongues

Crosses have appeared on Appalachian hillsides,
sudden testaments to a fire in the bones --
witness to a faith that has been translated
into crumbling tipples and trestle bridges
into rusting automobiles and railroad tracks --
testimony to the conviction of coal miners
and of miners' wives, who seal their love
against the day when the Free Will Baptists
and the Old Regulars, the Hardshells, and the snake-handlers
pray the corpses out of their coffins to reclaim the land
in the name of the redbud and the May apple,
for the dogwood, the sumac, and the ironweed.

Ambrose

Cahuilla

Into Andreas Canyon old Ambrose climbed.
Under a rock, in cool shade, a moss patch for a pillow
he fell asleep. It was pleasant there,
a good place to dream. His spirit slipped out
& sailed up the mountain. From the cave where he lived alone
in bitter darkness, Tahquitz reached out & snatched the tail.
"You have hold of my spirit," said Ambrose.
"Why do you want it? You can't eat it. I'm not dead yet.
Let go of my spirit. Your face is so ugly you might scare it
& it won't come back."
Ambrose was a medicine man. He could talk to Tahquitz that way.

Tahquitz pinched Ambrose's spirit between his fingers.
His face was ugly, his body covered with bumps.
"You find me a young woman," he said, "& I'll let go."
Your granddaughter maybe. She would be sweet to eat."
Back down to the village old Ambrose went.
That night he refused food & sat alone in his hut, smoking.
Tahquitz might be a god but he could be fooled.
Gods have ordinary faults. Tahquitz liked to eat young women:
their hair, their bones, their private parts.
He gobbled them till not a shred remained.
Ambrose didn't want that to happen to his granddaughter.
He smoked & thought & smoked some more.

Next day Tahquitz thundered down from his cave. Ambrose's daughter sat by the oasis pool. Tahquitz eyed her hungrily. When he tried to pick her up she slipped between his fingers. Her body was coated with mud. "What's wrong?" he said to Ambrose. "What have you done?" "Nothing," said Ambrose. "Last night Frog snatched her & took her into the pool. He wants to marry her." Tahquitz slapped the water with his foot. "Frog!" he roared. "That girl is mine, not yours!"

Back up the mountain Tahquitz stormed. That night he blazed across the sky like a meteor. Next day the earth shook, hills tumbled loose & crashed into the valley. Trees disappeared, huts, fields of beans & corn. At the bottom of the oasis pool, his limbs stretched taut, Frog kept the earth from cracking apart.

Weeks later Ambrose found a deer with a broken leg in Andreas Canyon. The deer was alive. Its liquid eyes reflected hot fragments of the sun. Ambrose carried it up to the cave where Tahquitz lived & laid it under a bush. "He's lonely," said Ambrose. "I must help him."

Gulf Shores

I walk out a quarter mile into the ocean toward Cuba and the Keys, Hemingway country, two or three hundred miles to the southeast, the water never rising over my ankles, speculating on whether Jesus fooled Peter in a similar way, but of course I know it was really a lack of faith that came between them, still, after a stunt like that one, you have to wonder why he stuck with him so long, to the end almost.

Turning around, I see you a few yards out from shore, swaying your big round belly, no longer ashamed of it and its amphibious baggage of amniotic sac and fluid, clear and amorphous like a sandwich bag; you are giggling the way demented children giggle, completely at home here, like a turtle; I'm glad we came.

Yet, my reptilian brain tells me I have done my selfish part I must go out and prove myself again, kill something bare-handed, lick the blood from my fingers and bring you back the prize, limp and stinking at your feet, grunting praises to myself; somewhere in this vast ocean lies something I can kill for you.

I walk out a few feet more,
brushing against a translucent jellyfish,
repulsed by the sight of it and feel of it on my skin.
Lord, I wonder what Adam thought of pregnancy?
It really is just you and I and it, isn't it?
Three in one: the trinity.
I turn again.
Yes, I know that a few yards more
I will be grey and swaying with the seaweed
at the bottom. This is as far as my trick goes;
these are the limits of my faith;
I am all bravado, sham heroics, walking in shallow
water and calling it miracle.

You call me to return.
From where you are, so close to the shore,
you cannot see the darkness
beneath which lies the bottom of everything;
I could wrestle whales.
I begin walking toward you,
defly retracing the steps of my miracle,
thinking, Christ put back the severed flesh
that rash Peter hacked off in a rage of love.
Above the waves,
I hear the angel rumble in your womb.

Drought

The lagoon is drying up--pulling
its edges back into the bay
where past water levels stain the cliffs
and piers expose their old man legs.
In town there's a ban on sprinkling,
the county says no to smoking on outdoor
jobs and to keep chain saws and all
running motors out of long grass.
On the 10 o'clock news stockmen
sell off thirsty cattle while farmers
cultivate bales of dust, riding
through wind on powdery wheels.

The Indians used to smear berry juice
on their chests to attract rain.
Singing, shouting, waving their arms,
their bare feet pounded the ground
until the sky tipped over and walked
on electric fingers. If the sun
sucked up the river, they left
for sweeter land--leaving empty
vessels and legacies on canyon walls.

Now we're fulfilling prophecies;
legions of archangels watch
behind the sun with drawn swords--waiting
for a line of silent children
to knock on hollow water tanks
and call down wells that throw back stones.

the imagination that reading requires, or listening to a radio requires, and particularly reading poetry. That's the one you have to bring more of yourself to, for everyone reads his or her own poem. So much is suggested in poetry, so that everyone who reads the same poem comes up with a different version. But we're not trained for that.

Do you think that teaching children at a young age would cultivate the skill and desire to read and write poetry?

If we had teachers who loved poetry--which we don't, by and large. If you took any collection of people, including teachers, grade school or high school or college--none of them read much poetry, even the English teachers. There are many exceptions, but this is still basically true. If we had teachers who loved poetry, they would pass that on. I know this from experience, for I was fortunate to have one in Brooklyn in fifth grade, and I had a couple of high school teachers who genuinely liked it. That influences people. But instead, if you get some teachers who are a little afraid of it, and hurry through it, that washes off too. I think that better teaching of poetry or just better presentation of it perhaps would be the best way to do it and would definitely help. I know they have the Poets-in-the-Schools program, and that's the right direction. But they need a poet in the schools who is good at working with children. It's clear to me that a good teacher can make a big difference, and I think we're in a short supply of people like that, unfortunately.

In your poem "Advice to My Son," you write that "beauty is nectar / and nectar, in a desert, saves." What does this mean?

This is an example of the doubleness of poetry. What I was trying to think of in this poem is that there's a doubleness in life that everybody's aware of. One is the practical side, and one is the so-called aesthetic side. I think in America the aesthetic side is down-played, so I play it up more in that poem. People don't think enough about their surroundings. That's why they're so quick to knock down trees--it's connected with all kinds of other things. So that actually it is practical, the aesthetic thing is practical at a particular point (I'm saying this in the poem). When I wrote that poem I was taking off on an actual garden a friend of ours had. He had alternating rows of vegetables and flowers. I thought that this was a nice idea--it is clearly symbolic of the way one ought to live, that is, sustaining both sides of one's being.

To be specific, between the peony and the rose plant squash and spinach, turnips and tomatoes; beauty is nectar and nectar, in a desert, saves-- but the stomach craves stronger sustenance than the homied vine.

A Conversation with Peter Meinke

Peter Meinke is a poet and fiction writer who has published three books in the Pitt Poetry Series: The Night Train and the Golden Bird (1977), Trying to Surprise God (1981), and Night Watch on the Chesapeake (1987). His collection of short stories, The Piano Tuner (University of Georgia Press) won the 1986 Flannery O'Connor Award. He has received NEA Fellowships in Poetry in 1974 and 1989; in 1978-79 he was a Fulbright Professor at the University of Warsaw, Poland; in 1981-82 he was the Jenny Moore Writer-in-Residence at George Washington University. His poems and stories have appeared in The New Republic, The Atlantic, The New Yorker, The Georgia Review, The Virginia Quarterly, and many other magazines. He has been the Director of the Writing Workshop at Eckerd College since 1966, and this semester he is the McGee Writer-in-Residence at Davidson College, North Carolina.

To what extent is writing poetry cathartic for you?

I think my poems are less about pain than many people, but if you read 50-100 poems by anybody there will be some about pain if it's covering human emotions at all. I don't look on writing as painful; I look on it as difficult, but there's very little else that I'd rather do. In poetry you express extreme emotions a lot of times. It's a place where you can handle it and it gives meaning to it. When you have a painful experience, to write about it deepens it and helps you understand it. I think writing is cathartic in that sense: it's helpful in understanding yourself and, since I don't think we're that different from other people, the world around us. It's cathartic in a good sense. But I don't write about pain as much as many people. I would like to have, when I'm through, poetry that covers everything from the most pleasant of feelings to feelings of melancholy and anguish. I would like to cover the spectrum of emotions.

To what extent could poetry save people from their despair?

I believe that it does help people. The problem with that is you can't make it a rule--it sounds pompous and self-serving, and it's often not true. I had a wonderful old grandma who didn't know about poetry at all. She seemed to be happy, led a full life. I think she would have been happier if she had come to read poems. But it's something you can't push on people. I think is a well-rounded person and society poetry would be a natural occupation. Nothing's as strong as a poem when it works for you, because it's that kind of economic intense language that you can't match anywhere. The world would be better off if they were able to read poetry, because it does deepen one's understanding. This happens to me even at my advanced age. I wish people read it more, and I think they would like it if we taught it earlier on. I think we need better learning in the schools. We are becoming less imaginative. I hate to pick on television, but it doesn't require

We need something more as humans that differentiates us from animals. Without beauty, one's life is really incomplete. It's hard for me to imagine a life without art, music, poetry. I think in America we don't emphasize this nearly enough, and people lead lives that are very drab. People don't know why they are perhaps despondent, as in the Williams poem--for one thing, they don't have beauty to pull on. You need beauty; you need that nectar--you need food for the imagination. Imagination is what makes us special if we are, and it differentiates us from the wild boar. It's beauty that feeds the imagination. This poem is saying that you need things of the imagination--nectar, that fancy word. And we need bread--something solid that everyone understands. Really the poem is saying to read poetry, and listen to good music.

What is the role of the poet?

The role of the poet should be to hold his own ground and to write exactly what he wants to and what he sees. The one advantage of poetry being such a minority occupation is that he or she is free from pressure to a great extent. So you might say it could be a truly honest voice--I'm writing exactly as I see fit. Because there's not anyone around to say, "You can't say that." For one thing they don't read us very much. I think the role of the poet basically is to write as true a description of his experience as he can. The second thing is to in some way refresh our language, to say things without absolutely insisting that you must say things in a totally new way; I think that every successful poem is a story that's never been told before in that particular way. So it's a contribution to language as well as to story or meaning.

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And I had done a hellish thing
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow!

--Samuel Taylor Coleridge