

This, therefore, is a faded dream of the time when I went down into the dust and noise of the Eastern market-place, and with my brain and muscles, with sweat and constant thinking, made others see my visions coming true. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds wake in the day to find that all was vanity; but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may act their dream with open eyes, and make it possible.

T. E. Lawrence
(Lawrence of Arabia)
from [The Seven Pillars of Wisdom](#)

Until one is committed there is the chance to draw back;
always ineffectiveness.

Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation) there is one
elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless
ideas and splendid plans:

that the moment one definitely commits oneself,
then providence moves too.

All sorts of things occur to help one that would not
otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues
from the decision, raising in one's favour
all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and
material assistance which no man would have dreamed
would come his way.

I have learned a deep respect for one of Goethe's couplets:

"Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it!
Boldness has genius, magic, and power in it."

W.H. Murray
from The Scottish Himalayan Expedition

and [Johann Wolfgang von Goethe](#)

Life moves on, whether we act as cowards or heroes. Life has no other discipline to impose, if we would but realize it, than to accept life unquestioningly. Everything we shut our eyes to, everything we run away from, everything we deny, denigrate or despise, serves to defeat us in the end. What seems nasty, painful, evil, can become a source of beauty, joy and strength, if faced with an open mind. Every moment is a golden one for him who has the vision to recognize it as such.

Henry Miller

"It is not the critic who counts, nor the man who points how the strong man stumbled or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly...who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who, at best, knows the triumph of high achievement; and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."

Theodore Roosevelt, 1910

You are the future, the immense morning sky
turning red over the prairies of eternity.

You are the rooster-crow after the night of time,
the dew, the early devotions, and the Daughter,
the Guest, the Ancient Mother, and Death.

You are the shape that changes its own shape,
that climbs out of fate, towering,
that which is never shouted for, and never mourned for,
and no more explored than a savage wood.

You are the meaning deepest inside things,
that never reveals the secret of its owner.
And how you look depends on where we are:
from a boat you are shore, from the shore a boat.

Rainer Maria Rilke

“You are the Future”

from The Soul Is Here For Its Own Joy,

by Robert Bly

You see, I want a lot.

Perhaps I want everything:

the darkness that comes with every infinite fall
and the shivering blaze of every step up.

So many live on and want nothing,
and are raised to the rank of prince
by the slippery ease of their light judgments.

But what you love to see are faces
that do work and feel thirst.

You love most of all those who need you
as they need a crowbar or a hoe.

You have not grown old, and it is not too late
to dive into your increasing depths
where life calmly gives out its own secret.

Rainer Maria Rilke

From "A Book for the Hours of Prayer"

Translated by Robert Bly

A poet is somebody who is being, and who expresses his or her being through words. This may sound easy. It isn't.

A lot of people think or believe or know they are being – but that's thinking or believing or knowing; not being. And poetry is being – not knowing or believing or thinking.

Almost anybody can learn to think or believe or know, but not a single human being can be taught to be. Why? Because whenever you think or you believe or you know, you are a lot of other people: but the moment you are being, you're nobody-but-yourself.

To be nobody-but-yourself – in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody else – means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight; and never stop fighting.

As for expressing nobody-but-yourself in words, that means working just a little harder than anybody who isn't a poet can possibly imagine. Why? Because nothing is quite as easy as using words like somebody else. We all of us do exactly this nearly all of the time – and whenever we do it, we are not poets.

If, at the end of your first ten or fifteen years of fighting and working and being, you find you've written one line of one poem, you'll be very lucky indeed.

And so my advice to all young people who wish to become poets is: do something else, like learning how to blow up the world – unless you're not only willing, but glad, to be and work and fight till you die.

Does this sound dismal? It isn't.

It's the most wonderful life on earth,

or so I feel.

ee cummings

"A Poet's Advice"

first published as a letter he wrote to high school students in the "Ottawa Hills High School Spectator", October 1955.

A human being is a part of the whole, called by us “universe”, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest – a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.

Albert Einstein

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow, creeps in this petty pace from day to day to the last syllable of recorded time and all our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death. Out, out brief candle! Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more: it is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.

William Shakespeare
"Macbeth"
Act 5, Scene 5

This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being a force of nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.

I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can.

I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no “brief candle” to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.

George Bernard Shaw
“Man And Superman”
The epistle dedicatory to the play

By declaring that man is a responsible creature and must actualize the potential meaning of his life, I wish to stress that the true meaning of life is to be found in the world rather than within man or his own psyche, as though it were a closed system. By the same token, the real aim of human existence cannot be found in what is called self-actualization. Human existence is essentially self-transcendence rather than self-actualization.

Viktor E. Frankl
Man's Search For Meaning

I would rather be ashes than dust!
I would rather than my
Spark burn out in a brilliant
Blaze than it should be stifled by dryrot.

I would rather be a superb
Meteor, every atom of me
In magnificent glow, than a
Sleepy and permanent planet.

The proper function of man
Is to live, not to exist.
I shall not waste my days in
Trying to prolong them.
I shall use my time.

Jack London

