

personal greetings to all present. He did mention the names of many groups of tours and when ours was mentioned, we, in our small group of ten, broke out with loud cheers and hand-clapping for His Holiness. We were more powerful than some groups of fifty and over. The Pope spoke on peace and asked all to recite the rosary often to keep this peace in the world. With a final blessing he thanked all again for coming to see him and wished everybody good health and happiness. With more shouts of "Viva le papa", from the crowd, Pope Pius turned and finally disappeared into his inner-chamber. Once again, as he left the balcony my emotions poured forth tears of joy and gladness, as I knew my dream of seeing a pope had come true.

—CHARLES J. DOYLE—  
Freshman 1956-57.

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### THE BECKONING FIRESIDE

Pale as the moon the long road lies,  
As the moon hovers blankly above;  
Pale as the moon the long road lies,  
As sure as the flight of a dove.

Straight the path, without a gust,  
Still though the shadows stay,  
My feet upon the moonlit dust  
Wend their weary way.

The upward grass my tracks pursue,  
As the road I trudge by meads,  
And nearby air sends soothing dew,  
Sparkling as some pearly beads.

So, when at last I've trod the way,  
'Tis proof of welcome home  
To see the fireside's looming ray  
Bid me never more to roam.

—THE SCARRED BARD

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### THE MUSIC OF THE UNIVERSE

In the whole vast and wondrous world of created things there is a harmony that is felt by the true poet, and by him conveyed to the ordinary man. Good poets may live forever as the companions of our peaceful hours; their noble words can refresh us in our hours

of doubt and darkness; their thoughts may serve to inspire us in the day of battle and their fine pictures of the beauties of the world may serve to enlarge our love for its Creator. Poetry is the music of the universe.

Why should we read poetry? We might as well ask why birds should sing. People with any feeling for music should love poetry. Human senses are often more "responsive" in childhood than in later years; the child's liking for poetry, therefore, is as normal as his liking for the taste of candy, the smell of roses, the sight of a sunset, the feel of wet grass beneath his bare feet.

It is a curious thing that so many people (even some students of English literature) seem to think that it is not worth their while to read poetry. They tell us that they "cannot" read it. Perhaps they have never tried seriously. But it is well worth the trying; we can learn to read and to love poetry. Poetry can stir the feelings and fill the mind with edifying thoughts; if we do not learn to understand and to love it, we are missing something that adds greatly to the pleasure of life.

The themes of poetry have usually been on noble subjects. Nature has always excited poets; love has ever been another favorite subject; and religion has inspired hymns of praise and poems on death and immortality. Poetry divines the essence of nature, of love, of eternity, better than other means we have for expressing them. Consider natural beauty alone: it is splendid to see a grand sunset; it is very fine to be able to look on a great artist's painting of a sunset; but the joy is ours for ever, if we are able to recall the glorious words of some great poet who has described a sunset. A stanza from Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" serves as an example of a perfect pen-picture:

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,  
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,  
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,  
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

That reminds us of General Wolfe's remark about this same poem. It is recorded that he was reading Gray's "Elegy" as he sailed up the St. Lawrence to attack Quebec in 1759. When he had finished the stanza which ends with,

"The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

he exclaimed, "I would rather have written these lines than take Quebec." Many readers have a similar enthusiasm for the "nature" poetry of Wordsworth or Yeats or Hopkins.

Now consider the hundreds of beautiful poems expressing human love, e.g. Robert Burns's "Flow Gently, Sweet Afton," or Thomas Moore's "Believe Me if all Those Endearing Young Charms."

Consider too, what a wealth of philosophic thought is to be found in such a poem as Longfellow's "Psalm of Life."

Life is real, life is earnest,  
And the grave is not its goal;  
"Dust thou art, to dust returnest"  
Was not spoken of the soul.

Lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime;  
And departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time.

English and American poetry abounds in such contemplative verse.

The clever rimester may interest or amuse, but he rarely touches the deeper emotions. While writers of good poetry may be few, yet everybody is capable of reading, enjoying, and profiting by good poetry. There is no better education than to share the feelings, hopes, joys and sorrows, of persons of acute sensibility; and this, poetry enables us to do so. When great poets write for us, they enable us to see into nature, into the heart of man, into eternity, with something of their own inspired insight. They lend to us their eyes, so to speak. Their poems express the feelings of their hearts far more clearly and warmly than these could ever be expressed in ordinary prose. Thomas E. Brown, for example, says more in one short verse, than we could express in a lengthy paragraph of prose:

A garden is a lovesome thing, God wot !  
Rose plot, fringed pool, ferned grot—  
The veriest school of Peace;  
And yet the fool contends  
That God ! is not—  
Not God ! in Gardens !  
When the eve is cool ?  
Nay, but I have a sign  
'Tis very sure God walks in mine.

Poetry speaks to us; it also speaks for us.

However, the modern world is not fully convinced that there is time for poetry. Poetry, it is believed, has little utilitarian value—it only activates the intellect and exercises the imagination. Of course, such an attitude ignores poetry's general aesthetic value: it raises the standard of taste and enlarges the appreciation of the fine arts. Such an attitude also ignores poetry's contribution to social sanity: poetry keeps man in touch with God.

—SISTER MARGARET MARIE, C.S.M. '58—