

A Good Poem

is first cousin to the song, a rhythmic,
patterned, short-short story, sequencing
splendidly and sometimes quirkily
designed features of language, generating
multiple messages via metaphorical
surprises and unexpected connections,
juxtaposing startling revelations of novel
meanings potentially bewitching, even baffling
befuddling, and sometimes seeming irreversibly
incomprehensible, yet finally combining
and cooperating to inspire the
still unwary audiences

virtues that in concert command the poem
to linger, testing and enriching the imaginations
of all lucky enough to encounter it.

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Robert Frost famously said that writing poetry
with neither rhyme nor meter
is like playing tennis without a net.

Someone else scoffed that poetry nowadays
is any writing in which the printed lines
fail to reach the usual page margins.

Some might consider that definition
potentially at risk, as a result of
recent narrowing of the page width
in *Poetry Magazine*. . .

Sometimes
perhaps
even the court
has been removed
by Frost himself.

And why not!?

Poem: A composition, whether in verse or prose, having beauty of thought or language.

Verse: Poetry in general, especially when light or trivial or merely metered and rhymed, but without much serious content or artistic merit.

*Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary
of the English Language*