



E.P. Fisher

### On the Care and Feeding of Poets

Bargain hunting for poets is a big mistake.  
Pedigrees are not important but, if you go for bust,  
A pedestal is a must.  
Consult your local librarian, or simply visit a nearby café.  
Look for one whose temperament suits your disposition—  
Do you prefer the quiet writer of haiku, or visionary weaver of words?  
The well-bred dilettante, or the atavistic wild man?  
(The natural eye-catcher in any literary litter is, of course,  
The rambunctious one . . .)

Poets love to chew the fat & relish a bone of contention,  
Gnawing away at tradition & good sense like a comfortable old shoe.  
A neophyte will rhyme all night  
But his bark is usually worse than his bite.  
Still, it's always wise to take precautions:  
Keep a shelf well-dusted & a dictionary close at hand

Until properly housebroken.

Most poets find sustenance from many sources  
But generally speaking like their experiences raw!  
Obscure arcane, classical texts, trance-states & dreams  
All may figure in a well-balanced diet.  
Many can be finicky, but most are prone to over-indulgence.  
A number have sadly starved to death & suicide is quite common.

No elaborate grooming is usually required.  
A sort of “natural” disheveled look is almost universally preferred.  
Many males take readily to the unkempt bohemian style—  
Growing beards of varying lengths, dressing in clashing colors,  
Sporting ascot or ear-ring, dark glasses & felt beret,  
Chain-smoking Gauloises, or some such other affectation . . .

Though most imagine living in a cottage by the sea,  
Many have been known to take up residence  
In cloistered library niches & college workshops,  
While a few feel only at home in a belfry or mental ward.  
Others know no fear & must be kept on a chain!  
One notable example rarely left her upstairs bedroom,  
And several have slumped around the capitals of both old & new worlds.

Only a select few enjoy the security & peace of mind  
That comes by being committed to memory  
(Which, after all, is as close as one ever gets to immortality . . .)  
But all are eminently portable, easily carried about for inspiration  
And will fit quite comfortably in your back hip pocket.

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E.P. Fisher has published work in *Poetry Motel*, *Mobius*, *The Griffin*, *The Lyric*, and numerous other periodicals. He taught high-school English in Uganda as a Peace Corps volunteer and worked for many years as a play therapist and “adventure-based counselor” with special-needs children.