

Student Essay on Karl Shapiro's Definition of a Poet

Karl Shapiro's Definition of a Poet

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

Student Essay on Karl Shapiro's Definition of a Poet.....	1
Contents.....	2
Essay.....	3

Essay

This poem is Karl Shapiro's definition of a poet. He first explains poets as people that don't see, they feel. Then he explains that that is why we think of "feeling" people as poetic. Shapiro once said, ". . . what the poet sees with his always new vision is not what is imaginary; he sees what others have forgotten to see." Maybe that is why Shapiro thought that children are poetic. They haven't forgotten how to express feeling yet. But Poetry is not physical touch. It's emotions.

Shapiro then explains that the insulators or winter coats of the world are people like teachers and preachers who provide facts, but suppress feelings. Facts and concrete things are what "normal" people take comfort in. Normal people are not comfortable with emotions, but poets are the people who let emotions run through them freely. They are conductors of human emotion. They tend to go up to the winter coats of the world, feel them, describe them, but never put them on because poets don't like constraints such as clothing, straight jackets, and set rhythm patterns. Poets pull and stretch at the boundaries as much as possible like a little boy pulling at clothes that are too small and uncomfortable. Rather than thinking logically, poets think "along the electric currents." In other words, they think with their hearts, not their heads. They fail all the logical classes, describe how flunking feels, and then feel better about themselves.

In the first stanza, Shapiro told the reader that people think of certain other people as poetic; but in the third stanza, he shows that people aren't comfortable with grown men being poets because poets must be vulnerable, and poets like being that way, while "normal" people triple-lock their doors. Because parents are uncomfortable with grown poets, they are worried about their children liking poetry. So when their kids read poems, they assure themselves that it's just a phase.