

Poetry and Possibilities

We only just solved a New York Times crossword celebrating April's poetry month, containing the quotations below about poetry:

- Poetry is truth in its Sunday clothes (Joseph Roux)
- Poetry is an echo, asking a shadow to dance (Carl Sandburg)
- Poetry is the deification of reality (Edith Sitwell)
- Poetry is an act of peace (Pablo Neruda)
- Poetry is being, not doing (e.e. cummings)

If I had to encapsulate the attraction of poetry for me in such a statement, it would probably be something like:

- Poetry is words carrying other possibilities, which take us out of ourselves.



For example, the last era in which I was working in a downtown office tower was in the mid '70s, however, then, my job and the people I was surrounded by were much less agreeable than today. I remember writing this set of haiku on a coffee break, trying to capture the juxtaposition of the natural and the completely fabricated in that environment, next door to the MacMillan Bloedel waffle-shaped concrete tower, where cherry trees were in blossom down in the street and the mountains were prominently in view. (It's not that different downtown today, except the mountain views are a little more obstructed each year.)

Urban Haiku

1

nipped cherry branches
harbour a vagrant wind,
marriage of unrest

2

all day long, birds
flutter on ledges too narrow,
a small, grey furore

Continued.../

3

brown plumes of smoke
turn in the blue sky; diesel
cows moo on the freeway

4

a mariachi band
on Robson Street, in the rain.
some are dancing.

5

on a windy street
a drunk yells, "Lady!" men
turn. women look away.

Haiku, the Japanese form of poetry with
17 syllables, often with a natural theme,
still intrigue me. I'll end with a haiku
written on one of my walks home from
downtown this spring.

excited trembling
of spring greenery teases
wintered eyes awake

