

A poem is a small (or large) machine  
made of words.

William Carlos Williams

A poem is a walk.

A. R. Ammons

For poems are not words,  
after all, but fires for the  
cold, ropes let down to the  
lost, something as necessary  
as bread in the pockets of  
the hungry.

Mary Oliver

Writing free verse is like playing tennis with the net down.

Robert Frost

. . . free verse is not, as Frost would have it, like playing tennis  
without a net, but is the high wire act without the net.

Charles Wright

You have to be free to play around with the  
notion that day might be night, love might  
be hate; nothing can be too sacred for the  
imagination to turn into its opposite or to call  
experimentally by another name.

Adrienne Rich

The point of truth comes when a poet  
goes from writing private poems in a  
public language to writing public poems  
in a private language.

Mark Strand

... at bottom poetry, like all  
art, is inextricably bound up  
with giving pleasure, and if a  
poet loses his pleasure-seeking  
audience he has lost the only  
audience worth having, for  
which the dutiful mob that  
signs on every September is  
no substitute.

Philip Larkin