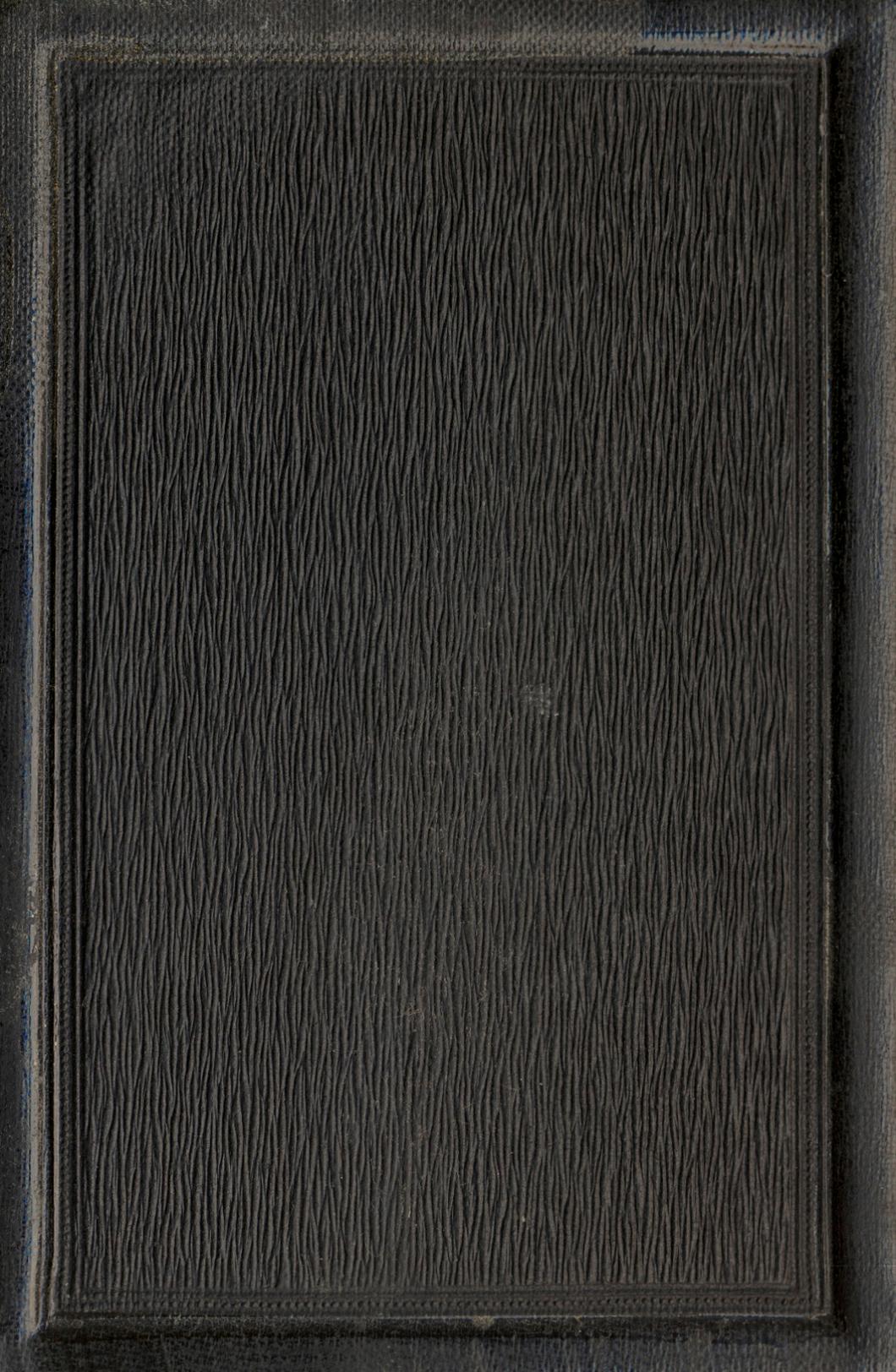


*City of Auburn  
Poet Laureate  
2012-2014*

A compilation of poems by  
*Dick Brugger*



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# *A Point of View*

Banged-in fenders are someone's concern  
Not me. For the moment I'm dent free  
and to my knowledge don't owe a dime.

Have some money in the bank. Freedom  
to go to Puyallup or Cincinnati, wander along  
Soos Creek, stay home, rob the refrigerator,  
do the Times crossword puzzle.

Have oodles to worry about should I work at it.  
Could enter into a frenzy thinking about the  
endless possibilities of fatality, ponder  
the world debt or the flux of the market  
fuss with my lawn, calculate disaster

or plaster myself with molasses which we had  
hoped to use to make bread  
should I think of it.

# *A Some Would Say Sonnet*

There are erratic snow squalls  
closets with uneven shelves  
ways to make the short look tall  
and lots of wrongs to dispel

There are naïve baboons  
and self-conscious squirrels  
proud thunderstruck loons  
and oysters without pearls

There are women in menopause  
and Scots who aren't thrifty  
do-gooders without a cause  
and judges who are wifty

But you and me, who are we?  
We create the world we see

# *A Time of Wonder*

Scriptures and Traditions tell us Christmas  
Is a hallowed time, the Word made flesh.  
Our Auburn epitomizes this in many

Languages and tongues, our many words  
Made flesh. This yuletide, may we  
Rejoice in who we are!

# *Andy*

I have a friend  
Who was married to Carly Simon  
And I have a friend who has a friend

Who won eight million dollars  
And I have another friend, Andy,  
A Boeing engineer, a computer whiz,

Who attended a convention in LA.  
Six of the conventioners wanted to dine  
At a restaurant several miles away

But they had a five-passenger car  
Andy said, "Put me in the trunk."  
They did and they all got there

# *Auburn*

When I think Auburn I think native born Way Scarff,  
Pat Cavanaugh, I'm awed at Dan Norman who's lived here his entire life.

I think Joe Nishimoto who tilled Green Valley's fertile earth.

I think Helen Shaughnessy----whose love for Auburn lasted five days shy  
of one hundred years----loved Auburn more than anyone could know.

Then I think of my own kids, they're Auburn native born. Like many of you

I came to Auburn en-route to someplace else. My work fixed me here  
amid the awe-inspired presence of Mount Rainier.

# *Before Nightfall*

As a little boy at dusk  
my mother, my brothers and I  
got into our Buick and drove  
drove through woods and woods  
looking and looking through dense trees  
our noses pinned to the glass with cupped eyes  
gazing, gazing trees and openings, scanning  
meticulously, scrunching our eyes to see even one  
maybe two or gloriously a herd. As if frozen  
elegant in stature, ears alert, looking back at us  
in unison and profound quiet they'd  
lope in synchronicity like a massive symphony  
into the trees thunderously soundless  
our hearts amazingly attuned  
attuned to the majesty, utter majesty of deer.

# *Birds*

forget the denomination  
just birds  
like to know  
when they tuck themselves in  
sink heads into plump breasts  
allow wings a feathery stole  
wrap themselves into deep sleep

maybe they have dreams of lofty flights  
or cramps in their spindly legs  
jostle themselves awake  
unfurl themselves  
walk a branch, flee a limb  
maybe they just can't sleep  
count the needles of a pine  
or cavort with an owl  
whose proper life  
is nighttime

# *Celebrate!*

Everybody has at least one day  
To celebrate, his or her birthday.  
I celebrate being Auburn's Poet Laureate  
What a bash!  
A Three-Year Day!

# *Cincinnati Squirrels*

On scathing humid sun-drenched  
Sunday afternoons my Uncle Dan smokes Phillies cigars  
for all nine innings, thick wet smoke, putrid smells  
permeates sound in Uncle Dan's modest royal blue Ford.

Radio monotones "Ball one," "A hit into left field!" and  
modulation lifts a notch. "Foul ball" and modulation falls.  
Strike two all the way to Frenchtown and back.

"Strike one, two outs" drones entire afternoon through.  
Unlike most kids growing up, I fall asleep hating baseball  
in Uncle Dan's royal blue Ford's backseat.

Later in life to fill my baseball knowledge void,  
I invent my own team, Cincinnati Squirrels,  
stats, players and scores

"How the Squirrels doing, Brugger?"  
"Just fine. They're four in four" and  
to this day haven't a clue what that means.

# *City of Guanghan*

Province of Sichuan  
Republic of China:  
We, the City of Auburn,  
Washington State  
United States of America  
are honored  
to have a  
Sister City Relationship  
with you.

Please know  
Our Mayor, Peter B. Lewis  
speaks for all of us with his fervor  
Auburn is “more than you imagined.”  
Do realize we prize our city as you prize yours  
When we Americans  
think of your China  
we think of your  
Great Wall  
your Ancient Dynasties.  
You arouse our curiosities  
and when you speak of Panda bears and mah jong  
You warm our hearts.  
Many Auburnites delight in playing mah jong  
and all America loves the Panda bear

We are both suburb cities,  
Guanghan of Chengdu  
Auburn of Seattle  
you deny the sun with an ample haze  
we with sometimes incessant rains  
both of us are energetic  
both of us productive  
We have lots to share  
lots to learn from each other

Finally  
please do know how deeply honored we are  
for a relationship we pray  
will last for the ages.

# Clutter

utterly dismays me  
My wife says daily, Richard, put your stuff away.  
I've done it on occasion more often than not  
until one day I realized it's a losing battle  
as stuff magnifies on the spot.  
I've got more clutter than anything else I've got.

I suggest, had we a smaller house: a room for her,  
a room for me, one for us, a kitchen, a tiny dining nook,  
a room to gather for friends and then that room  
bigger than all others, wholly for clutter, with a built-in  
conveyor belt that when you open the door you are met  
with a choo-choo train like cart, something resembling Noah's  
Ark, you can fill with stuff and send it on its way.

Clutter-less, wouldn't life be simpler? Each day I would look  
at my wife and she at me, we'd smile at each other and state in  
equanimity: we thank the Lord we're clutter-free.

# *Creepy Time*

by Richard Brugger

Three in the morning black as can be  
an indisputably squirrely innumerably  
furry legged maggot-like critter slithers

its way toward your neck. Unsure its  
existence doesn't alter its ferocity, its  
imminence, you wiggle your entire

being, torso and all, hoping to quell  
the journey of this might-be apparition,  
hoping against hope a diversion will

fit better its quest of utter destruction:  
You! Somehow you fall into deep sleep,  
dream of onions and six-legged sheep.

# *Different Mindsets*

At one moment in my son Josh's life  
when he was a small child  
skunks predominated  
On a trip to the airport once  
we came on a dead skunk on the highway  
and my son pleaded that we stop to look at it.  
We drove by too fast to do that,  
but nothing could interrupt his thoughts about skunks.  
All the way to the airport and all the way back home.  
Skunks is all he could talk about.

Upon arriving home  
Joshua bounded into the house yelling  
to his even younger sister, Jessie,  
"Jessie, Jessie, guess what?" he screamed,  
"we saw a dead skunk hit by a car."  
"What color was the car?" his sister asked.

# *Dry*

Nothing quite like  
cold beer on warm afternoons.  
VO on the rocks with a twist  
any day after 12 noon,  
margaritas sometime.  
Like a cigarette, only way to relax.  
One day no more booze.  
Hardest thing to say to a buddy,  
I stopped. It's over. No more.  
Looks at me like I'm loony.  
Feel like it must feel  
to come out of the closet,  
alien and alone.

# *Every Summer Sunday*

The insistent  
persistent voice of Councilman Pelosa  
about a farmers market resounded  
around City Hall, the Mayor and  
entire council took heed and  
voila! as they say a la francais  
it's there, like magic

It's got the City  
Imprimatur  
a niche in the city  
machinery that allows action  
a manager with a budget  
to make success happen  
time and substance  
to draw in Vendors from far and near  
garner an array of volunteers  
with an esprit d'corps  
that has finesse, it's hard core.

more. It has a site  
a delight in time of economic downturn,  
the gracious Auburn Sound Transit Plaza  
lures people to our downtown

and they're not even waiting for  
a bus or train, they're looking for  
avocados, berries in season,

They have reason to roam and look.

# *Figaro*

Dogs  
are made for snow.  
Flash leaps about, pokes his snout  
in powdery drifts, darts in a frenzy  
half-crazed, zigzags the virgin tapestry.  
Whiffs a wake of cotton-white billows

Not so Figaro  
the cat black  
in the white landscape, an unseemly contrast  
steps into the snow like a dowager  
tiptoeing through a chicken coop  
arches his back, withdraws claws, won't budge.

Back in the warmth finds himself on a windowsill  
twines together like a ball of wool  
paws deftly snug underneath  
looks out on the blinding blizzard, smug.  
Purrs

# *Fissures of Hope*

The deciduous tree a pleasantry  
For me in the nakedness of winter  
When its branches, stark, enchant the bitter cold

Two old women forlorn sit on a park bench hewn of rough wood.  
Some brittle brown leaves make click click sounds,  
Flurry about, hug their booted feet.  
The women, tightening their shawls, huddle close together.  
The sun's not shining; the skies severe grey.  
I like a deciduous tree winter day.

The air's clear cold voice: from far off a lone dog's hard bark.  
Some man, shuffling along, claps his gloved hands, jumps up and down,  
Tries to tramp out the inveterate cold. The sun tries to break through  
An enlightening sky, fissures of hope

# *Grew up in Pennsylvania Taught*

I grew up in Pennsylvania taught  
To be fearful of thunder storms  
Rattlesnakes, icy hills and Lyme  
Disease which I understand  
Can be devastating several times  
In a hundred years

Here in my Pacific Northwest  
We have nary a poisonous snake  
And thunder most frequently shy  
Sounds like ten miles away,  
Low-wattage lightning like a damp match,  
Finally lit, fades into naught. Our fears,

I'm told, grumbles far below the earth,  
An aorta deep within our being  
Always ready to awake, not unlike  
San Andreas Fault and God forbid  
The volcanic eruption of Mount Rainier  
Which I pray is never, never near

# *Hair*

I'm a bearded one, surmise  
some look askance at me. Hippy,  
methinks they say. Way  
back when I was a kid, only one  
red bearded man in the neighborhood. Communist,  
we'd say. Only other in my recollection  
a full-fledged white bearded actor, Monty Wholly.  
Gave him celebrity, we'd say. Could he act?  
Don't recall.

In my latter adolescent years shaved sometimes  
twice daily, dark brown hair, very fair complexion,  
used to say, Had a five o'clock shadow at 3 pm.  
Then, sensitive to being clean-shaven. Today  
stubble on a young male on a Banana Republic ad's in.

Now, at my age, beard and all, could be mistaken for a sage.  
I can live with that.

# *Handicap*

Lambertville Music Circus letting out  
Voluminous cars, horns blowing, all  
Converging to descend the zigzag hill  
To the lazy village on the Delaware.

There was I, a kid on crutches, broken leg,  
Wobbling through the maze to the family car  
Horns stilled, silence immense. Pope  
Himself couldn't command such respect

Now old, wobbly with age, routinely  
Traipse mall and cinema parking lots.  
Respect from youth and aged immense.  
You'd honest to gosh think, I myself pope.

# *In the Eye of the Beholder*

At the Safeway check-out counter  
among the several customers ahead of me  
a fifth grader from Dick Scobee  
nudges her family, exclaims,  
“There’s my art teacher!”  
points to me.

She and I  
acknowledge each other with a smile.  
Her family looks directly at me,  
scrunch their eyes,  
search in vain,  
desperately try to find  
their daughter’s art teacher.  
All they see is an old man.

# *Kudos for Kukors*

On the walls of Auburn High  
a galaxy of photos of grads  
of distinction. I've always  
marveled at those Who's Who.

I trust it's the same at  
Mountainview. If so, surely  
Ariana Kukors of Team USA  
2012 Olympics will make the

cut. Imagine, she finished less  
than a second out of medal spot!  
Kudos and Bravo for you, Ariana,

home from Londontown. Fittingly  
you make Auburn immensely proud.

# *Managed Care*

I'm ancient in comparison to my wife.

We looked at long-term care insurance and the cost was astronomical. My wife told a friend of hers at work about it. "I'd shoot myself first before I'd pay that much," the woman said.

"Oh, if he needs it, would you  
shoot my husband?"  
said my wife.

# *Neely Station*

There was nothing stark about  
Brittany Lane Park, where we first  
Resided in Auburn in 1976: grand  
Grounds, great pool, elegant trees,

Manicured lawns. Never dawned  
On us that Neely Station could be  
Even nicer. Why not? Even the  
Neelys moved out of the mansion

Back into town. Maybe these new  
Folks making my ole Brittany Lane  
A sensation again, a fine realization  
& giving it a good old Auburn name:  
Neely! Really, what a deally, eh?

# *News!*

Several years ago now  
my wife a zillion years younger than I  
said something derogatory to me in a jest,  
I feigned self-pity.  
The saleswoman came to my rescue, Frankly, I  
I think you're a  
A charming old man." Crapo,  
Woman, I felt like saying,  
Get a life!  
First time I heard it so unabashedly.

Thanks a lot.

# *No Pickles*

On a Fourth of July nearly forty years ago  
I sold pickles in Les Gove Park trying  
To make some money for Auburn Youth Resources  
On this Fourth, I have no pickles  
hot dogs or jam, not even scam to sell  
but some words emblazoned across our land In 1776:

You know them, self-evident truths:  
all of us are created equal by our Creator  
with certain unalienable Rights, among these  
are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness  
words and meaning we need to continually grasp

# *Pickles in the Park*

On the Fourth of July, thirty-five years ago,  
at my first fundraiser for AYR, one board member  
owned a pickle factory -- thus, pickles at Les Gove.

Several of us stood out there with our trope,  
yelling, "Buy a pickle on a stick." Few did, but  
we gathered stares from everybody walking by.

Some even glared, and by the end of the day, we'd  
eked out only fifty bucks. On that Fourth of July,  
I hardly thought about the Declaration of Independence,

or the searing words of our Founding Fathers:  
self-evident truths... all men created equal... endowed  
with the Inalienable Rights of Life, Liberty, and

the Pursuit of Happiness. What gifts we have  
in America, right here in Auburn, selling pickles  
in Les Gove Park!

# *Pioneer Queen 2012*

One of you ladies  
will become 2012  
Auburn' Pioneer Queen

Already each of you are queens  
or someone special in someone's eyes  
either your children's, or a relative's or a friend's

It's because who you are or who you have been  
or maybe what you are and what you have been.  
a woman of valor, a woman who has endured, suffered much,  
a friend, a companion, a support for others.

Obviously you have glowed, or maybe you have grown  
in someone's eyes, or you have overwhelmed someone.  
maybe you have changed someone's life,  
made him or her or them happier; given them hope  
when they were down, maybe  
given them life itself.

Obviously, each of you have glowed, have been radiant  
in someone's eyes. Yes. Each of you.  
You wouldn't be here otherwise.

Now one of you will be chosen 2012 Auburn Queen.  
And for that one of you we rejoice  
and wish well. May you, whoever you are  
have a happy and even fun reign.

And for the others of you, runners up, as they say,  
have a joyous day and year  
if you didn't have what it takes to be queen  
as I said, in the first place, you wouldn't be here.

# *Poets Tuesday*

As Striped Water Poets we know it's an accepted fact  
that writing poetry demands finesse, not exactly tact.  
It means that we necessarily be faithful to our creativity,  
that we're ourselves, that we possess "genuinity."

On Tuesday evenings we're a mixed bag as we gather.  
Who we are, our age, where we're from, doesn't matter.  
What does count is that we're unafraid to recite or read  
the words we've written, our voice, that's all we need.

The process for our get-together isn't really unique.  
What we do after we've read is to listen to and critique  
what we hear, the works of the other poets who arrive.  
We're on 2nd Fl. Auburn City Hall on Tuesdays live.

# *Potatoes and Water*

My son as a child won fifty dollars in a lottery of sorts. When asked what he wanted, he said, "A bag of potatoes." I froze at what he chose but then he was a child not beguiled by big ticket items. Josh, we asked,

"Why potatoes?" "I like them," he said and by other suggestions could not be led. Sometimes I think if my wife had a prize choice of her own devise, she'd say, "Water!" Water, it so happens is a priceless commodity in her life.

The waste of it in any dimension irks her beyond comprehension. If, any of us lets the water run inordinately, she'll pounce at us, "Turn the spigot off!" The preciousness of water has been the ongoing mantra of our marriage

from the earliest years. She cites the many ways we waste it every day. Guess, if my son wanted a bag of potatoes, who knows, what he chose isn't Inordinate, much easier to calculate than the cost of dribbled water.

# *Stealth*

On a humid, still, lazy August mid-afternoon, the year nineteen ninety-six, sitting at my desk happenstance has it I look out my window, looking north on Auburn Way, notice the Dairy Queen's dull red logo, the U Haul operation across the street suggests nothing out of the ordinary when, glancing south-westward, emanating from southwest traveling northeastward, uncommon as Superman flying through the air from his Clark Kent Daily Comet office building glides a sleek jet black paper-thin bat-like dull grey Stealth Bomber as quiet as an unseen mouse scurrying across a Persian carpet at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, a day the museum's closed, the assigned attendant momentarily leaves the room for a sip of water. I swivel 90 degrees in my chair, look out my north window, affirm what I see isn't an apparition. The Stealth Bomber floats across the sky into oblivion. You'd be in awe too.

# Thanksgiving

My son Josh says  
Thanksgiving's his favorite holiday.  
I can't argue, I like it too, like

The camaraderie it creates. Think  
Way back when I was a kid, FDR  
Fastened it down as a National

Holiday. There's always family,  
Friends and unexpected guests  
Providing a memorable zest

My friend Father Godley says  
Dinner with friends is a sacrament.  
I believe that.

# *The Tiber*

My wife and I  
had a fight along the Tiber. Julius Caesar!  
what colossal folks  
we are. It started in

Trastevere. Not the Tiber  
but our fight, a  
ferocious night,

and history undaunted flowed on

# *Today*

She walks through the kitchen  
Into the pantry as she's done for eons  
Yesterday her son was killed  
Today her walk is no different  
The terrain's the same  
The clock on the wall has its hardly discernible whirr  
The counter is juxtaposed to the sink  
The coffee pot's substantially where it was.  
Nothing, nothing is the same

# Unsung

As a kid I begged my parents for a violin  
and promised I'd diligently practice.

After several months practice,  
Earl Frick summoned my mother,  
waving his Icabod Crane bony finger;  
"Mrs. Brugger, Richard is a lovely boy  
but you're wasting your money."

My cherished violin relegated to church suppers  
and firemen's carnivals as a comedy prop,

I couldn't sing or play but I learned to make people laugh.

In Penn State's Schwab Auditorium I regaled  
musical comedy audiences, but at rehearsals  
the director in the back of the house, the wings  
or wherever he was, would stop in mid-song  
an entire ensemble of one hundred or more of us  
bathed in brilliant light, and shout,  
"Brugger, don't sing, mouth it!"

Sometimes I feel like I'm the only one in the world  
who wants to sing and can't.

# Words

I dabble with words, the only tools a poet knows  
I'm not so dumb; I write love poems to my wife.  
And for years I wrote poems to my amazing staff  
Their skills at helping kids and families were vast.

In the past, years ago, poetry was seen, so I think,  
As something tied to greeting cards, pink ribbons,  
Oily verse, and what's more, some eked morose.  
I'm not so dumb; I write love poems to my wife.

Frankly, poetry today, to my chagrin, has not come  
A long way. Thirty people might attend a Poetry  
Reading Event; twenty of them are there for the  
Open Mike, that's life. Yes, I'm one of the twenty.

Let me say something of the poet today: he or she  
Is consumed with poetry, wants nothing more than  
Improving his verse, is elated with that better word  
And I'm not so dumb; I write love poems to my wife.