

Definition of poetry

[Literature](#), [Poetry](#)



What is Poetry? According to W. H. Hudson we all have a sense of what poetry constitutes. There are innumerable definitions of poetry given by poets and critics of poetry and out of which Hudson chooses some famous definitions. They are given below:

- Johnson : “ Metrical composition” , it is “ the art of uniting pleasure with truth by calling imagination to the help of reason”
- Macaulay: “ we mean the art of employing words in such a manner as to produce an illusion on the imagination, the art of doing by means of words what the painter does by means of colours”
- Carlyle: “ We will call Musical thought” Shelley: “ In a general sense may be defined as the expression of the imagination”
- Hazlitt: “ It is the language of the imagination and the passions”
- Leigh Hunt: “ The utterance of a passion for truth, beauty, and power, embodying and illustrating its conceptions by imagination and fancy, and modulating its language on the principle of variety in unity”
- Coleridge: “ Poetry is the antithesis of science, having for its immediate object pleasure, not truth”
- Wordsworth: “ It is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge and the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science”
- Edgar Allan Poe: “ It is the rhythmic creation of beauty”
- Keble: “ A vent for overcharged feeling or a full imagination”
- Doyle: “ It expresses our dissatisfaction with what is present and close at hand”
- Ruskin: “ The suggestion by the imagination, of noble grounds for the noble emotions”

- Prof. Courthope: “ The art of producing pleasure by the just expression of imaginative thought and feeling in metrical language”
- Mr. Watts-Dunton: “ The concrete and artistic expression of the human mind in emotional and rhythmical language”
- Matthew Arnold: “ It is simply the most delightful and perfect form of utterance that human words can reach”
- “ It is nothing less than the most perfect speech of man that in which he comes nearest to being able to utter the truth”
- “ It is a criticism of life under the conditions fixed for such a criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty”

As Hudson state when we look at them critically, and compare them with one another, certain disturbing facts about them become clear. Commenting on these definitions Hudson concludes they are almost distracting in their variety because the subject is approached from many different points of view. Some, strictly speaking, fail to define, because they express rather what is poetical in general, wherever it may be found, than what is specifically poetry. Some, on the other hand, are too narrow and exclusive, because they recognize only the particular kind of poetry in which the writer happened to be personally interested.