Poetry is sense; good sense; penetrating, often heart-rending sense.
--Robert Graves

Poetry is a response to the daily necessity of getting the world right.
--Wallace Stevens

Poetry is the best words in the best order.
--Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Poetry is important. No less than science, it seeks a hold upon reality, and the closeness of its approach is the test of its success.
--Babette Deutsch

Poetry is, above all, an approach to the truth of feeling.
--Muriel Rukeyser

Poetry is truth in its Sunday clothes.
--Joseph Roux

Poetry is like making a joke. If you get one word wrong at the end of a joke, you've lost the whole thing.
--W. S. Merwin

Poetry is indispensable—if only I knew what for.
--Jean Cocteau

Poetry is what is lost in translation.
--Robert Frost

Poetry is a way of taking life by the throat.
--Robert Frost

Poetry must have something in it that is barbaric, vast and wild.
     --Denis Diderot (18th c.)

Poetry is emotion put into measure. The emotion must come by nature, but the measure can be acquired by art.
     --Thomas Hardy [note: in Hardy's day, "art" in this sense meant more like "effort" or "craft"]

Freedom is poetry, taking liberties with words, breaking the rules of normal speech, violating common sense. Freedom is violence.
     --Norman O. Brown

When I found the world of poets, I realized that I was not so odd after all.
     --Galway Kinnell (poet)

These poems have come a great distance to find you.
     --Edward Hirsch

Poetry is so many things besides the shiver down the spine. … It is the best translation of words that do not exist. It is hot coffee dripping from an icicle. It is the accident involving sudden life. It is the calculus of the imagination. It is the finishing touch to what one could not finish. It is a hundred things as unexplainable as all our foolish explanations.
     --David McCord

If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can ever warm me, I know that is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head is taken off, that is poetry. These are the only ways I know it. Is there any other way?
     --Emily Dickinson