

*City of Auburn
Poet Laureate
2012-2014*

A compilation of poems by
Dick Brugger

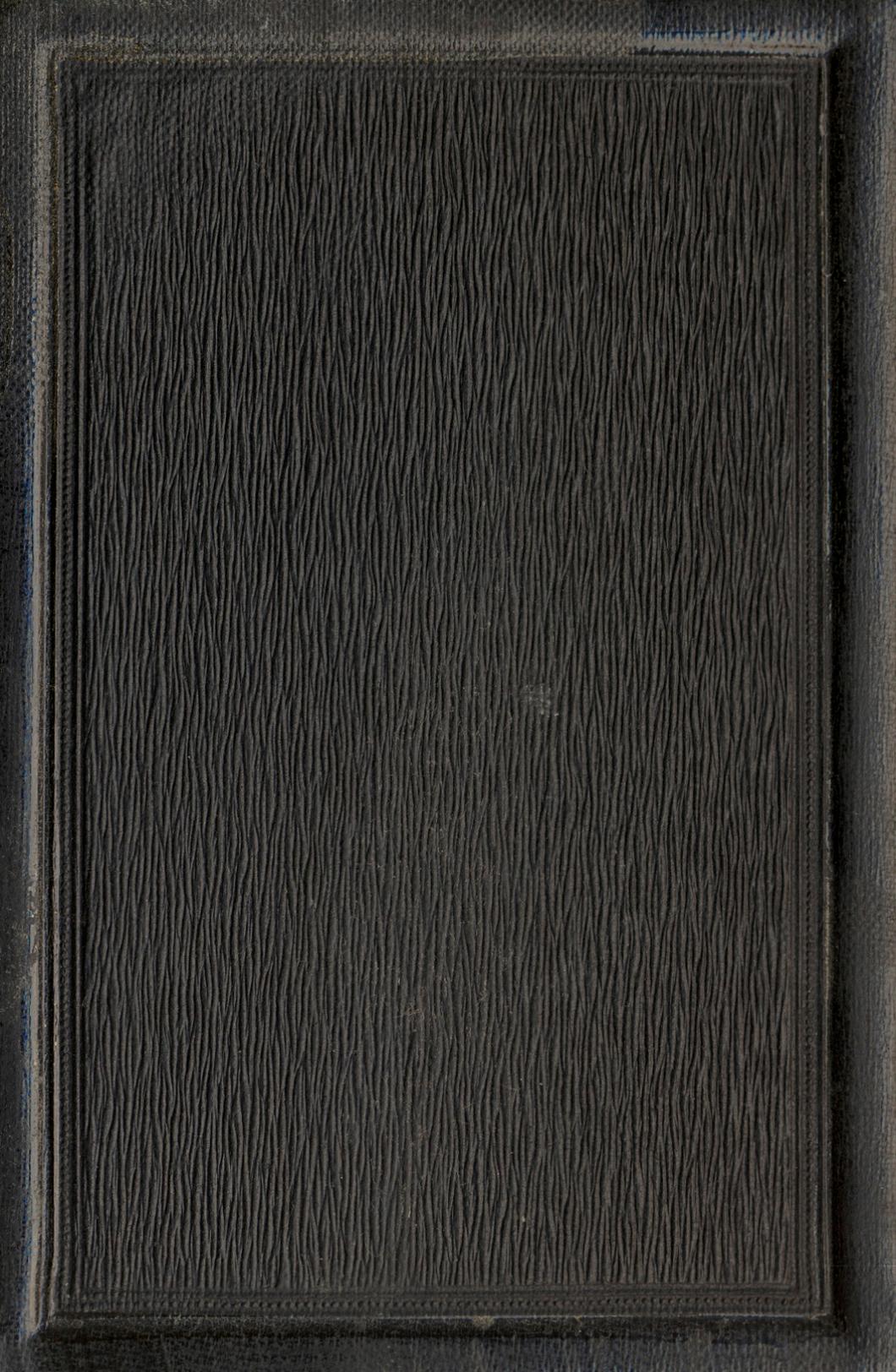


Table of Contents

A Point of View.....	Page 1
A Some Would Say Sonnet.....	Page 2
A Time of Wonder.....	Page 3
Andy.....	Page 4
Auburn	Page 5
Before Nightfall.....	Page 6
Birds.....	Page 7
Celebrate!.....	Page 8
Cincinnati Squirrels.....	Page 9
City of Guanghan.....	Page 10
Clutter.....	Page 11
Creepy Time.....	Page 12
Different Mindsets.....	Page 13
Dry.....	Page 14
Every Summer Sunday.....	Page 15
Figaro.....	Page 16
Fissures of Hope.....	Page 17
Grew up in Pennsylvania Taut.....	Page 18
Hair.....	Page 19
Handicap.....	Page 20
In the Eye of the Beholder.....	Page 21
Kudos for Kukors.....	Page 22
Managed Care.....	Page 23
Neely Station.....	Page 24
News!.....	Page 25
No Pickles.....	Page 26
Pickles in the Park.....	Page 27
Pioneer Queen 2012.....	Page 28
Poets Tuesday.....	Page 29
Potatoes and Water.....	Page 30
Stealth.....	Page 31
Thanksgiving.....	Page 32
The Tiber.....	Page 33
Today.....	Page 34
Unsung.....	Page 35
Words.....	Page 36

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.