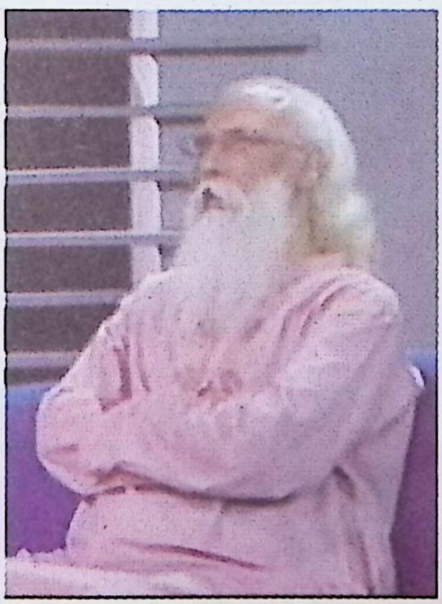
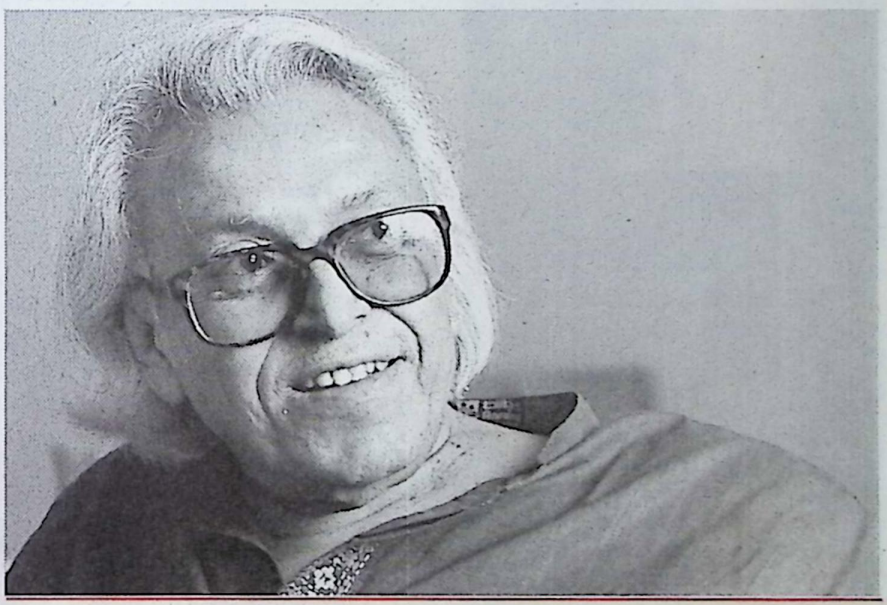
That is way it still occupies the syllabi of educational institutions. The students of schools, colleges and universities read poetry and get acquainted with the creative genius. School children read easy rhymes and commit them to memory. It provides a game-like pleasure. Adults read them for the cognitive purpose; they analyse them, delving deep into the meaning. The study of poetry (its basic principles, forms and techniques) is called poetics and the analysis of its rhythmic structure is called prosody. Poetry is an excellent artistic endeavour which the erudite readers approach scientifically. So it is interesting and valuable as a topic of disciplinary study.



It is a common allegation that poetry is not read by people today. Life is so busy nowadays that people have little time to read poems. Many think reading poetry is just waste of time. It appears true, more or less, for other sectors of literature (like story, novel, drama, essay) as well. The demand of poetry is on the decline. So publishers also show less interest in the publication of poetry books. The consequence is that poets are rarely moneyed. But the poverty of poets is insufficient to prove that poetry is worthless. Poets are superb creatures. They are not mad and their creations are not the raving in madness. They are superior humans and their products, albeit having less economic value, formidable stuff which the world may boast of.

Without poetry, human life is dry and human society is barren. Those who brush aside poetry as trash are imbecile. Plato might be wrong in his assessment of poets and poetry! A poem can do a lot if it is a poem. Now, what is a poem? What qualities it should have? I have no answer of my own. I would rather resort to great American poet Archibald MacLeish for the answer. See whether it can satisfy you:



A poem should be palpable and mute
As a globed fruit
Dumb
As old medallions to the thumb
Silent as the sleeve-worn stone
Of casement ledges where the moss has grown -
A poem should be wordless
As the flight of birds
A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs
Leaving, as the moon releases
Twig by twig the night-entangled trees,
Leaving, as the moon behind the winter leaves,
Memory by memory the mind -
A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs
A poem should be equal to:
Not true
For all the history of grief
An empty doorway and a maple leaf
For love
The leaning grasses and two lights above the sea -
A poem should not mean
But be
(Ars Poetica)

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