

## What Is Poetry?

A person of my acquaintance  
Asked me one evening, "What is Poetry?"  
I drew back in disbelief. "What is  
Poetry indeed!"

"Poetry," I explained, "is like a pump  
Designed for bicycles that  
Have not as yet been invented."

"Poetry," I explained, "is wonderful.  
Imagine yourself thrown from the roof  
By gangsters.  
Where do you find solace?  
In poetry.  
You would do well to read poetry  
All the time."

To signal the close of my lecture,  
I drew and parried with  
A little silver sword  
I carry at me side  
For such purposes.

### Battery Park

This morning I nourished a  
Bold pigeon with many  
Shelled peanuts.

He perched on my ankle.  
He fed from my hand.  
He scratched the calf of  
My right crossed leg with  
His feet, leaving  
A hundred white lines of  
Unsettled epithelium.

The man sitting next to me,  
Smiling like my mother,  
Was my father.

— Michael Silverton

