

Twenty Minor Improvements for Greg Bettsⁱ

1. Never look a poet in the eye. They assume you are one of them. This often results in a manifesto.
2. Who is this 'we' that keeps showing up? We is the voice of authority.
3. Never trace a word back. Manifesto comes from hand job. All of its friends are regressive.
4. Many writers fall. Many poets fail. Rimbaud sobered up. Many of him.
5. Language and ideas never flow freely. To assume they do is one of the comforts of unquestioned privilege.
6. Ah, the lovely vanity of poets. They should always be above the law.
7. The nature of language is a beautiful romance, cultivated incessantly by non-authors.
8. Legal frameworks routinely come into being after technological and social change. Poets routinely oppose change.
9. McLuhan got religion. Without it he could not understand the poets.
10. If poets got religion they too could become authors.
11. It is always preferable to behead writers. It is, at least, a religious solution.
12. Words are not ideas. Prior to the Statute of Anne, writers did not receive any royalties, nor could they legally publish on their own.
13. The contempt of poets for 'just another worker in the system' is fairly mild, but understandably reciprocated.
14. A flounder is a fish.
15. The argument that poets are outside the system is somewhat diffused by the use of royalty statements.

16. Robert Service sold considerably better.
17. Agreed. Authorship has never been the model for writers. Writing is the model for writers.
18. Poetry has earned nothing. More surprisingly, nothing has earned poetry.
19. Yes, the poetry of poets against authority looks different.
20. The system encourages the use of terms like 'radical freedom'. It is the most effective means of neutralization.



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ⁱ In response to "Poets Against Authorship: A 5 minute Manifesto in 20 parts, 15 seconds each" by Gregory Betts, published in *17 Seconds, Summer 2011 Issue*
<http://www.ottawater.com/seventeenseconds/issue3/PoetsAgainstAuthorship.pdf>