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## A Jug of Verses

Walter Leuba

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## *a jug of verses*

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POEMS are designs in words, articulate forms, speaking shapes of feeling and thought. They make use of the common and uncommon meanings of words, the traffic of words in the history and fashions of language and the power of their sounds floating through the mind. Poems are made by men and women who think that the writing of a poem is a vigorous enough act to satisfy many of their needs. Poems take the place of heroism, abnegation, retribution, and romance for those who think that a work of art is the best deed. Poems domesticate the lively and chop-licking man-eating animal in man so that he can contemplate the universe acutely and in peace, befriend his fellows, and serve his anger and indignation honorably. This tamed animal in man now watches over his thought and keeps it honest.

THE WRITING OF POEMS requires thoughtfulness to make feelings true, and feelings to make thought actual. The writing of poems is a great and humane act. It discovers a man to himself and offers him candidly to others. There is no better business and none more social and easy, for the most obscure poem communicates the lovable part of a man and that is what we need to know more of. There are many very bad poems written, hundreds of thousands of them, but the act is always good, is always an encouragement to life. Poems are not essentially what are found in the classics and in collections, anthologies, and memories: they are what a man is now struggling to express with his knowledge, his mind, and his imagination.

—WALTER LEUBA