



Wanda Sue Parrott

PERSONA IN TRANSIT: *POET* or *SCRIBE*

Humans are Earth's only life forms that write poetry. To perpetuate civilization's evolution, set back by ongoing wars, poetry can serve as non-religious sermonizing from the pulpit of the human heart! Poetry is balm that fosters healing after angst (anger, pain, sorrow, rage, disappointment and other hurts of life) assaults the human psyche.

If it is to endure, a poem should be a truth pertaining to the human spirit, time-worn because humanity is time-woven. Timeless timeliness separates great poems from less-enduring poetry. Good poems disguise worn-out truths—by clothing them in fresh terms and imagery.

The true muse is always beneficent by inspiring the Scribbler to become a Scribe, even if the poet writes the sacred words shit, fuck and other such expletives! Always! The Muse of Poetry is spiritual sun light shining through mortal storm clouds on the shadowed path of the persona in transit.

A poet's ideas flow freely, but attainment of Scribthood status takes discipline which often stems the inspired thought and shapes it into fixed form. I have written free verse in five minutes or less, but have spent fifty hours on a sestina. I am a lazy poet, so have written 1000 3-line senryu poems for every 39-line sestina and have never yet finished a 19-line villanelle!

Any poem written according to rhymed and metered form, so it appears simplistic, takes discipline and work. The same is true of a well-crafted free verse. Both forms of expression can be love affairs between poets' minds and hearts even if full of gloom and despair.

I once won a little chapbook of *The Wasteland* by t.s.eliot, one of the so-called great modern poets. It was so depressing just to be near that I donated the book to the Salvation Army. I much prefer the metered, rhymed inspirational sparkle of Ella Wheeler Wilcox, a great poet of the 20th century.

Does true poetic scribthood mean becoming the metaphorical little child Jesus admonished people to be if they were to know the kingdom of heaven? Is heaven a higher state of consciousness in which humans realize their mystical nature as spiritual beings in physical bodies?

In my humble opinion, poetry is an expression of the highest form of literary politics, and all poems, to be good, must be truth poems, even if they are about the seamy side of life or sorrow of loss. Lacking that, it is easy for a person to string sentences or part-sentences together to look like poetry, which is why the modern poem can be something as inane or innocuous as a grocery shopping list.

Because of this anomalous form of literature, when people ask me what poetry is, I answer: **"I don't know. It is whatever your definition is."** Test yourself. Define what your own poem is really about in eight or fewer words. If you can't do that, maybe it's a poem waiting to become a Poem. That is good! Scribthood lies ahead, so keep writing!

May the muse be with you.