



A Guide For Choosing First Aid Poems For Your Soul

Throughout history there has always been an abiding alliance between the soul's health and the bold language of poetry. And when the soul is healthy it means the head, heart and body are all working in a bold, courageous unity. After all, a well-lived and soulful life requires both courage and boldness. Have you noticed? Here are some guiding principles I've used to help many people over the years choose just the right *attitude-reviving, perspective-shifting, soul-healing* poems. These are perfect tools for surviving and thriving in the best, most joyful times ... and in the most fierce and difficult as well. I invite you to build, use and enjoy your own poetic first aid kit.

1. The poems in your soul's first aid kit must work hard for a living, providing a unique and helpful perspective-shifting payload when you need them most.
2. These poems should wake, shake, confront and sometimes even shock you.
3. Your best poems will embrace and heal paradox, delivering practical gifts and bonuses along the way integrating your head, heart and hara (*aka body*).
4. The "*big*" emotions of major life changes and transitions will require equally "*big*" language in the poems you choose.
5. Great poems have a kind of ninja, black belt quality allowing them to slip around, under or over the natural defenses of your strategic mind.
6. Great poems are like the belly of a shark, able to address and digest anything: joy, grief, pain, delight, old tires, milk cartons . . . whatever.
7. Many of the best, most hardworking poems are actually stories in disguise but with all the boring parts removed.
8. Remember you can't force a great poem to do anything it doesn't want to do, but once it decides you can't stop it either, *meaning* these make great picks.
9. How do you know a poem is right? You will love it. It makes you happy. It's wonderfully subversive! It sneaks up and pulls the rug out from under you. It acts as bifocals for your soul. You will say to others, "*hey, look at this one!*"
10. A great poem tells the truth so hard it hurts.
11. If you don't speak your soul poems out loud, read them or write them often enough, some of them will simply fade or run away. They require attention.
12. You will naturally grow immune to some poems, which means you'll need to find new ones from time to time.
13. You can never say "*in other words*" while discussing a great, practical, soul-reviving poem. If there were better words, they would be the poem.
14. A great poem is not pushy! It feels like it's being spoken from inside you. It invites you inside the poem to have your own unique experience

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