

## Poetry

Marianne Moore, 1887 - 1972

I, too, dislike it: there are things that are important beyond  
all this fiddle.

Reading it, however, with a perfect contempt for it, one  
discovers in

it after all, a place for the genuine.

Hands that can grasp, eyes

that can dilate, hair that can rise

if it must, these things are important not because a

high-sounding interpretation can be put upon them but because  
they are

useful. When they become so derivative as to become  
unintelligible,

the same thing may be said for all of us, that we  
do not admire what

we cannot understand: the bat

holding on upside down or in quest of something to

eat, elephants pushing, a wild horse taking a roll, a tireless  
wolf under

a tree, the immovable critic twitching his skin like a horse  
that feels a flea, the base-

ball fan, the statistician--

nor is it valid

to discriminate against "business documents and

school-books"; all these phenomena are important. One must make  
a distinction

however: when dragged into prominence by half poets, the  
result is not poetry,

nor till the poets among us can be

"literalists of

the imagination"--above

insolence and triviality and can present

for inspection, "imaginary gardens with real toads in them,"  
shall we have

it. In the meantime, if you demand on the one hand,  
the raw material of poetry in

all its rawness and

that which is on the other hand

genuine, you are interested in poetry.