

Why Should a Banker Read a Poem?

Because it might give him the lingering image
of a stick-thin, angry suburban mother,
bruised eyes blazing shock and bewilderment,
as she sifts through the ruins of her blameless life.

Because it might offer a couple of words
that jab him like a shaman at the very moment
of his initiation into a wounded maturity –
words like doubt and responsibility,
corollary, consequence and humility;
words that reflect how you choose to live
in a world that has seen you tumbling like Icarus;
helpless, humiliated, and disgraced
in a screaming welter of wax and feathers.

Because it can open him to the actual world,
tear down the walls of his secretive silo,
re-introduce him to old, forgotten loves
like a message in a bottle, washed up on the beach
of his five star, protected yet empty resort.

Because it might show him a deeper wisdom,
that lies in the art of doing nothing.

And at last because it might help him to see,
that beyond the high-fives and the bonuses,
the pillories of shame and public contempt,
there lies a land of human possibility:
fed by truth, not the of fear of coming second,
rich in compassion as much as in currency,
a place still connected to the real and waiting earth,
a place where the famished heart can belong.

William Ayot