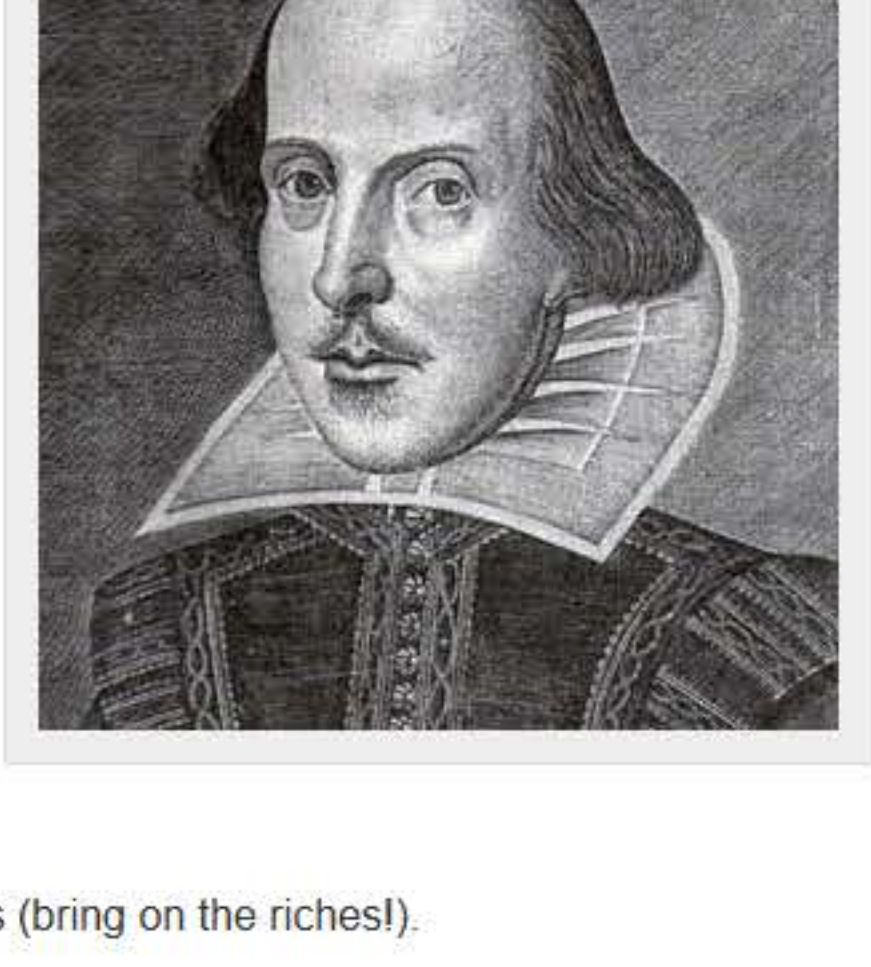


Why Shakespeare's Tweets are Better Than Yours

bySTEPHANIE SCHAEFER onFEBRUARY 13, 2012

“There’s no money in poetry, but then there’s no poetry in money, either,” said poet, Robert Graves.

As an English major with a concentration in (you guessed it) writing poetry—I wrote, analyzed, and interpreted—all while wondering where my liberal arts degree would take me.



Inundated with similes, allegories, symbols, and allusion, I learned how to prove themes and refute theses (bring on the riches!).

Despite all that, I'd like to refute Mr. Graves' famous saying.

To create content, you must be a poet.

“Poetry is language at its most distilled and most powerful,” said former Poet Laureate Rita Dove. Don't journalists, PR professionals, marketers, salespeople, and overall storytellers strive for powerful language every day?

In the business world numbers are important, but it's words that create those numbers. Headlines drive traffic. Slogans increase sales.

Think about your favorite Super Bowl commercial. Did watching [Matthew Broderick drive a Honda CR-V](#) take you back to days of teased hair and carefree adolescence? (Be honest, the thought of taking Monday off, jumping in a Honda and going to a theme park probably crossed your mind). Did the poetic portrayal of Budweiser throughout the past decades make you want to grab a bottle and meet up with old friends? The advertisements that you can remember were probably those that evoked emotion: *laughter, nostalgia, and sentimentality*.

Advertisers displaying their content during these coveted time-slots were challenged to engage viewers. They were tested to elicit emotion in the most macho football fans while telling a complete story in only a few lines. In this case, **can't we call the advertising copywriter a modern-day Robert Frost?**

For instance, consider the much talked about [Chrysler halftime commercial featuring Clint Eastwood](#). Politics aside, viewers empathized with the comparison of athletic victory to overcoming economic obstacles. Did you know that one of the writers of the metaphoric clip is actually published poet Matthew Dickman?

Dickman's powerful commercial was not the first literary advertisement to be featured in a prized Super Bowl slot. Back in 2006, advertisers capitalized on the wordplay of perhaps America's most widely read poet, Dr. Seuss. The [spoof with Harrison Ford, Joe Montana, and Jerry Rice](#) proved that rhyme and rhythm could be both masculine and modern in spite of stereotypes.

Again, with all due respect to Mr. Graves, a 30-second advertising slot costing \$3.5 million tells us that in the 21st century there is not just money in poetry, but BIG money in poetry. Still not convinced? Then check out the [lyrical advertisement for Kenmore](#).

So what does this mean for us [content creators](#)? I'm not saying we have to rhyme our words or speak in iambic pentameter (shout out to all the Shakespeare fans) to be effective. However, I think we can learn a lot from the limerick and sonnet. As French poet Charles Baudelaire said, “Always be a poet, even in prose.” **No matter what type of content we create, like poets, we must condense our language, speak in a unique voice, and subtly, yet powerfully, convey our theme.**

So next time you're [stuck on a headline](#), title your article the way a poet would name a verse. Annoyed that Twitter won't let you type more than 140 characters? Think of the word limit as a form of poetry, kind of like a 21st century haiku:

Like Frost or Thoreau,

Use words to create meaning.

You are a poet.

[Image: [tonynetone](#)]

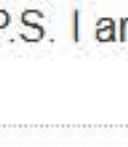
Written by: **Stephanie Schaefer**

Stephanie writes for JCKOnline.com. She loves cupcakes and power-ballad sing-alongs.



W&G February 13, 2012 at 8:17 am

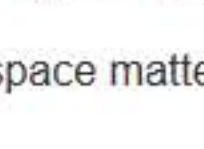
Absolutely brilliant post.



M.C. February 13, 2012 at 9:57 am

You had me at Rita Dove. 😊 Well done!

P.S. I am loving the recent English major representation on Engage!



Hailey Reissman February 13, 2012 at 11:05 am

Woohoo NYC office! Literature all day!

Love this post. Love that Rita Dove quote. The thing I enjoy so much about poetry is its preciseness—how each word, sound, space matters so much. “Distilled” is such a perfect word for it.

Way to fight for poetry, Stephanie! It's so misunderstood, but it's so, so worthwhile. Reading it in college made me look at language in a way I just didn't before I had to grapple with a really good poem. I think there'd probably be a lot more -good- content out there if every content creator took at least one course, with one really good teacher, teaching really good poetry. It expands your mind in a way that prose just can't.

Favorite poet?



Stephanie Schaefer February 13, 2012 at 2:16 pm

Thanks! I definitely agree with your comments, Hailey.

As for my favorite poets? I'd have to say Alastair Reid, Billy Collins, and Robert Frost, just to name a few...How about you?

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