

# Self Help Poems 18A through 18E

by [Carl Nelson](#) (October 2018)



*Comprehensive*, Tim Stoner, 2013

## Self Help Poem #18A

*Google Groupthink*

*“Unlike reality, human knowledge comes with a popularity quotient.”*

*–Delvin Taylor*

In my experience, Google search is much like dealing with an engineer.

(Which is as we might expect.)

You must already know the answer,

in order to frame the precise question,

in which case

the engineer will then give you the correct solution.

Otherwise, your resource will answer

whatever is the question

most popular with them.

The Google search engine is like this

in that it rarely goes off the beaten path.

The algorithm indexes the answers by popularity,

and as the popularity declines,

the integrity of the question deteriorates

and you get links to phrases within the question,

rather like the vehicle's tire falling off,

or the axle breaking

once you've gone too far off-road.

And as it is with Google, it is with social media

in that we must embed ourselves within the group  
which will embrace the actual reality  
in enough numbers so that  
the algorithm can then link us to  
the correct answer.

Otherwise, like sheep dogs,  
social media is forever directing strays  
back into the herd,  
and will vanish minority opinion  
through an algorithm which prioritizes by popularity.

### **Self Help Corollary Poem #18b**

*Cynicism 101*

*“Unlike reality, human knowledge comes with a  
popularity quotient. And one’s singular experience  
must contest with a plurality.”*

*–Delvin Taylor*

Experience can scatter the energies,  
be un-focused and time consuming,  
so that the best competitors often  
farm this out,  
let another do the due diligence,  
measure how their lives perform  
in terms of audience capture,  
(be a hard-nosed businessperson about this)  
and go from there.

This effort saving mental hack  
can be greatly augmented  
by following public opinion  
and maximized by following  
the opinion leaders; the trend setters!

The task is simple.

Pick the success you wish to emulate.

Share their opinions.

You are now functionally knowledgeable as them,  
and will know all that it is prudent to know

to circulate among the educated elite.

*Don't let your experience imperil your future . . .*

a lot of what you discover to be true

has a negligible audience and shouldn't be shared,

lest you appear the fool.

### **Self Help Corollary Poem #18c**

*Deplorables, How They Occur, and How They are to be Dealt With*

*"Unlike reality, human knowledge comes with a popularity quotient. And one's singular experience must compete with the plurality for existence."*

*—Delvin Taylor*

Leading opinion shows

that our knowledge of most everything

including, incidentally, your sex,

—to which you may cling tenaciously—

is, after all, largely a matter

of a political power construct  
under narrative control.

So,

if while enamored of your genitals and your life's experience,  
your opinion wanders outside of the current view  
—kept alive in a solution of blog posts and unpublished  
screeds—

the smart opinion will be that you are  
a fool, or contemptible—probably both.

So that,

while you might rail against euthanasia—

if the reasoned argument, logical prerogatives,

or the established scientific findings of your betters makes  
no impression,

how are they otherwise to manage your affairs?

### **Self Help Corollary Poem #18D**

*So Even Be Careful Where You Look or What You Watch*

Once an opinion has been voted in as knowledge,  
it is placed into life support on a library shelf,  
while its notions are moved into the Canon,  
where its appearance is kept dusted and polished  
by the pedants and given the deference from usurpers  
that a smug butler traditionally provides.  
And these provide the pillars of our somewhat stable  
civilization.

But everyone reacts to a crisis  
simply by turning towards or turning away.  
And all of these attentions  
embellish it with audience  
which grant it a truth  
which if persistent becomes knowledge,  
even if, in truth,  
The Emperor Wears No Clothes.

So by contributing to innumerable audiences,  
we create so much more knowledge than we might ever be aware,  
(Oh my goodness, the garbage modernity generates!)

that it's like tossing plastic into the ocean,  
or dumping chemicals to leech into the ground water  
to where . . . until,  
just for a hypothetical:

An audience, such as I was a pair of eyes in,  
might have substantiated knowledge  
causing the overthrow of the government  
of Bolivia, for all I know.  
It's scary.

### **Self Help Corollary Poem #18E**

#### *Fake News& Acquired Taste*

When you tell someone something they long to hear,  
how long will they long to hear it?  
It's the old sales conundrum  
to want something new,  
which is just as we know and prefer now.



Otherwise, why wouldn't we buy it?

Which is called 'acquired taste'

and the trick is to transfer it.

So be alert to what currently

has the affinity of the old,

like our country, for example.

And keep tweaking, improving, bringing about change,

until the emancipation of our forefathers is turned completely  
ass backwards

and we're sniffing its rear as the rarest of confections,

but still that good old Red, White and Blue

that we love.

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**Carl Nelson** is relishing a smaller existence in a smaller town along the Ohio River after fifteen years in the theater world. As a playwright in pre-opening rehearsals once said, "I'd like to be a carrot in the ground." Currently, he moseys about while working on *The Poets' Weight Loss Plan*—an interlarding of plan and poems by which has lost 45 pounds. He also runs The Serenity Poetry Series in Vienna, West Virginia. His work is available at: <https://www.magicbeanbooks.co/home.html>.

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