

Good Poetry, Bad Poetry, and Good Poetry Read Badly

by **G. Kim Blank** (February 2015)

“One great poet is a masterpiece of Nature which another not only ought to study but must study.”

–Percy Shelley, from the Preface to *Prometheus Unbound*

1. A Life Before Us

Without venturing too far into mired arguments about taste and aesthetics—or fully engaging critiques of canonization that descend from political correctness—is it difficult to recognize great poetry? Were there that many poets in the times of Donne, Herbert, Dryden, and Pope who wrote nearly so well? William Southey is obviously not in the same league as his arch-detractor, Byron. Hopkins trumps Patmore every time. [more>>>](#)