

Pondering the State of Poetry

If Robert Frost had a cell phone,
would he call for directions at the fork in the road?

Suppose Shakespeare used a Black Berry,
would he text message through Stratford.com
instead of writing sonnets?

What if Whitman blogged *Leaves of Grass*,
all eight of his editions, deleting his revisions?

How much is lost if Emily Dickinson
emails her poems into cyberspace
instead of jotting them on scraps of paper?

Would T. S. Eliot compress *The Wasteland*
for a sixty-second spot on nightly news?

Or Neruda translate
the language of his odes into lucrative ads
for Ralph Lauren or General Mills?

Suppose William Carlos Williams was too busy
channel surfing to notice *The Red Wheelbarrow*
or *A Poor Old Woman* munching a plum.

Perhaps Rumi, star of his own reality show,
might proclaim: *I only know what I've experienced.*
You must be hallucinating. *

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*Mathnawi, III, 6
translated by Coleman Barks

...from *Fire in the Grass*