Thoughts on Rhyming and on Poetry

Rhyming is the dialect I speak when I write a poem or tell a story on the way to a laugh or to a truth. To me, it is a natural way to express myself and a pathway to some special meaning either for me or for a reader. Most of my poems use some form of the heroic couplet which helps to set apart and to emphasize a singular idea. However, there are some risks in its use.

According to Louis Untermeyer in *Lives of the Poets* (Simon and Schuster, 1959, p.254), heroic couplets, as “double lines of matched verse tend to fall into still and separate units. Held by its chain of rhymes the heroic couplet often becomes rigid.” “Extraordinary flexibility” is required to free the medium so “that, instead of growing monotonous in sound and slow in movement, the couplets are so fluent, so unaffectedly natural that we are no longer aware of the form.” Of course, that is a far goal for me since he was talking about Alexander Pope! Nevertheless, it is the form that seems to have chosen me, and I have become accustomed to it.

In his book, Untermeyer identifies the guiding impulses of many poets. For Pope, it was making “common-sense harmonies” (p.252). Shakespeare, he calls “the mirror of mankind” (p.111). Untermeyer quotes Keats saying that through the publishing of his poetry “I leaped headlong into the sea, and thereby have become better acquainted with the soundings, the quicksands, and the rocks than if I had stayed upon the green shores and piped a silly pipe and took tea and comfortable advice” (p.474).

The essence of my poetry is discovery and joy. It is the walk on the beach as the sun arises, my eyes wandering ahead of my feet for a shell or a sparkle to put in my pocket or to store in my memory. Everything is new and all is unexpected. What joy it is to find that dream, that treasure waiting there for me! And it is an even greater joy when someone accepts the invitation to walk the sands beside me, knowing that they will find their own dreams and treasures through explorations such as these.

As a poet and a storyteller, I hope to take that walk and to start many others on their own adventures. This is my calling as both poet and storyteller.