

1. Of course there is a relationship between faith and poetry. By its very nature, the reflexive construction of its words which seek always to be simultaneously referential, poetry expresses a faith in something beyond itself. What is peculiar right now is that so few poets nowadays would admit to any belief—except in poetry and their professed “humanism.”
2. I grew up in a very traditional Midwestern, protestant society, with strictly defined roles for everyone, for children, men and women, even the family dog. Very little was questioned. I found that world dissatisfying and have been writing against it ever since. In defense of my family of origin, I was never discouraged from writing.
3. I am delighted that my daughter took after me! Surprised? Even as a little girl, before she could read, she was making up poems that my wife and I wrote down, so I guess I’m not surprised
4. We didn’t have any poetry books. We had some classics, some current books which were literary fiction, some best sellers.
5. Of course, it is the writer’s task” to shape the society into a better place today.” But he or she must do this by trying tell the truth— so as to awaken the attention—about human existence in as imaginative a way as possible.
6. I think the current state of poetry in America is indescribably rich in the number of poets writing and the current number of writing programs, small presses, reading venues and magazines available. And then there is the online world of publishing and performing, which is a whole new universe. Things have never been better.

Peter Cooley, New Orleans, October 7, 2014