



Charles

ILLUMINATIONS

Great Writers on Writing

“Emerson’s limitless faith in the power of the individual to make a new beginning, reinventing everything from his identity to the art of poetry, has had few takers in Britain. Consequently, their poets are less egocentric than ours, who love the first-person pronoun more than anything else in the world. American poems may probe psychological, philosophical, religious, and aesthetic issues, but they rarely show much awareness of history, economics, and politics. As a nation with a utopian bent, Americans prefer to dwell on the future rather than on the past. We are wary of traditions, closed intellectual systems, and ideas that do not come from experience. Intellectually, we tend to be autodidacts. All our great poets—and that goes for Whitman too—have been loners in search of an audience. In contrast, the poets in *New British Poetry* assume that they are part of a tradition, addressing a community that may neglect them now and then, but is there nevertheless.”

Simic