



ILLUMINATIONS

Great Writers on Writing

Muriel Rukeyser

“

In our schools, we are told that our education is pragmatic, that the body of knowledge is divided into various “subjects,” that all of these subjects on which we pour our youth are valuable and useful to us in later life. We are told that our civilization depends on further and new uses for everything it has, the development and exploitation of these. We may go ahead and specialize in any of these usable fields.

Except for one.

There is one *kind* of knowledge that will be given to us all through school and high school, which we are told is precious, it defies time, it strikes deep into memory, it must go on being taught. No matter what cities fall, what languages are misheard and “corrupted” and reborn. This is here, to be passed on. But not to be used. Among all this pragmatic training, never to come into the real and active life.

This is what we learn about poetry.

”