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What is Reading?

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WHAT IS READING?

What is reading? one may ask,
      What skills must one attain
So that he reads for meaning,
      And sees the author's aim.

Good readers think. They have intent.
      They know how much will sate
Their needs. They skim or read details—
      All these determine rate.

We learn a skill, then others,
      But they must integrate.
And on the "oneness" of them all
      Depends the reader's fate.

We start to read when first
      We note, sensations, all so true,
And then relate what's new to old—
      As mental content, too.

First, one identifies the words—
      The concepts that appear.
Then some just try to learn by rote
      These thoughts, and then stop here.

But there is more that one must do
      Than reading word by word.
A reader needs to understand
      So meaning is not curbed.

Effective readers also judge—
      That is evaluate.
They choose main thoughts and then detail.
      They think, they stimulate.

So reading is a way of life
      Identifying, true,
Interpreting, evaluating,
      Integrating, too.

—B.B.