

Poetry I

by Adrienne Rich

Someone at a table under a brown metal lamp
is studying the history of poetry.
Someone in the library at closing-time

has learned to say *modernism*,

trope, vatic, text.

She is
listening for shreds of music.

He is
searching for his name
back in the
old country.

They cannot learn without teachers.
They are like us what we were
if you
remember.

In a corner of night, a voice

is crying in a kind of whisper:
More!

Can
you remember? when we thought
the poets
taught how to live?
That is not the
voice of a critic
nor a common reader.

It is someone young in anger
hardly
knowing what to ask

who finds our lines our glosses
wanting in this world.

[Vatic: prophetic

Trope: figure of speech/figurative language]