



# TEXT #1

## *Why I Take Good Care of My Macintosh*

By Gary Snider, American Beat poet

Date: 1988

Complexity Level: Poem, so NA (but if written as prose, measures at 840L)

Source/Link: UC Davis IT Times website

<http://ittimes.ucdavis.edu/v6n4jan98/snyder.html>

### TEXT NOTES

Text #1 should provide a jumping off point for a class discussion of Technology and its relationship to our lives, as well as a first opportunity to practice close reading skills. Many literary texts, fiction or nonfiction, could provide such an interest-building reference point (for example Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* or Bill McKibben's *The Age of Missing Information*).

This shorter text is a poem written in 1988 by noted American Beat poet Gary Snyder, pondering his relationship with his Macintosh computer, a poem which is still relevant even though Snyder himself had moved from using "a Macintosh Plus with a 20Mb hard disk in 1988 to a Mac Powerbook 1400cs with 750 Mb" ten years later in 1998 (IT Times annotation to the poem) – and probably onward to a new technological device today. The poem is rich with images and metaphors, any of which might start a discussion about our relationships with technology, and what that relationship says about us. While written as a poem, it also presents a kind of imagistic argument, with its "Why..." – "Because..." structure. All students should be able to read this text easily, but will also need to dig deeply into the language of the poem to uncover its meaning, and to make their own meaning from it related to the unit's topic and their potential investigation of subtopics in the field of Technology.

Sample Text-Dependent Questions (to drive initial close reading and discussion):

1. Snyder presents a number of images that represent reasons why he takes "good care of my Macintosh." Pick any of his statements that follow the word "Because" and explain what a close reading of the image reveals.
2. Snyder states that "my computer and me are both brief in this world, both foolish, and we have earthly fates." What does a close reading of these lines from the poem reveal he seems to be saying – both about technology and life? What are some other ways we might think about – and research – relationships between humans and the technologies we come to love (and sometimes hate)?