



Wild Is the Wind: Poems

Carl Phillips

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A powerful, inventive collection from one of America's most critically admired poets

“What has restlessness been for?”

In *Wild Is the Wind*, Carl Phillips reflects on love as depicted in the jazz standard for which the book is named—love at once restless, reckless, and yet desired for its potential to bring stability. In the process, he pitches estrangement against communion, examines the past as history versus the past as memory, and reflects on the past’s capacity both to teach and to mislead us—also to make us hesitate in the face of love, given the loss and damage that are, often enough, love’s fallout. How “to say no to despair”? How to take perhaps that greatest risk, the risk of believing in what offers no guarantee? These poems that, in their wedding of the philosophical, meditative, and lyric modes, mark a new stage in Phillips’s remarkable work, stand as further proof that “if Carl Phillips had not come onto the scene, we would have needed to invent him. His idiosyncratic style, his innovative method, and his unique voice are essential steps in the evolution of the craft” (Judith Kitchen, *The Georgia Review*).

Wild Is the Wind: Poems Details

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From Reader Review Wild Is the Wind: Poems for online ebook

Anatoly Molotkov says

"His face/ was a festival, within which - just as/ tenderness is only sometimes/ weakness, or how what we were/ can become unrecognizable to what we are,/ or think we are - leaves swam the air." Another tender, finely wrought collection from Carl Phillips.

Jill Mackin says

Wonderful, simply wonderful poems!

"There's a rumored humbling effect
to loss that I bear no trace of."

"I have always thought gratitude's the one correct response to having been made,
however painfully, to see this life more up close."

Matt Graupman says

I'm not sure why exactly but lately I've been trying to get into poetry a little bit. It's just one of those things that suddenly seemed to pop up on my radar more and more, for whatever reason; having decided to be more adventurous in my reading, I've given in and picked up a few collections here and there. The latest one to jump off the library shelf at me is Carl Phillips' "Wild Is The Wind." As a fan of more literal poetry, unfortunately most of this collection was too flowery and abstract for me. Phillips' work has a great flow to it but I found the pieces in this book to be kind of repetitive, not just in its themes of regret, memory, and history, but in its words and phrases, too; this collection would've been more appropriately titled "As If" since Phillips uses that phrase in at least half of the works included in this book. Still, there were a few poems that really stood out to me. "Wild Is The Wind" wasn't my cup of tea but I'm still a poetry novice so maybe I'm just not equipped to fully appreciate it.

FAVORITES:

"Gold Leaf" - An animal skull leads to a contemplation of humankind's natural instincts.

"If You Go Away" - A meditation on the nature and form of Death.

"That It Might Save, Or Drown Them" - A comparison of the decay of a relationship to driftwood on a lonely beach.

Alana says

ROCKABYE

????Weeping, he seemed more naked
than when he'd been naked—more, even, than when
we'd both been. Time to pitch your sorrifying

someplace else, I keep meaning to say to him, and then
keep not saying it. Lightning bugs, fireflies—hasn't what
we called them made every difference. As when history
sometimes, given chance enough, in equal proportion
at once delivers
?????and shrouds meaning . . . About love: a kind
of scaffolding, I used to say. Illumination seemed
a trick meant to make us think we'd seen a thing more
clearly, before it all went black. Why not let what's broken
stay broken, sings the darkness, I
???????make the darkness
sing it . . . Across the field birds fly like the storm-shook shadows
of themselves, and not like birds. Never mind. They're flying.

Karen Watkins says

Carl Phillips' new book of poems, *WILD IS THE WIND*, reminds me of a quote: "Writing about music is like dancing about architecture." Writing about poetry? Even harder.

Cliché? Perhaps. Yet trying to describe why these poems *MOVE ME* upside-down-'n'-sideways? Impossible. Love them already.

I could tell my favorites — "Monomoy" and title poem "Wild Is The Wind." Though that may change another day. Yes, I'll be rereading them.

"...If I refuse, increasingly, to explain, isn't/
explanation, at the end of the day, what the sturdier/
truths most resist?...."***

JUST BUY THE BOOK — paper, not electronic —and read it slowly. So many readers claim they love poetry — but never buy poetry books. You must own poems, and reread them, to know them. Read 'em early: read 'em often.

One last suggestion. Do read "Monomoy" at least 3x. I'll tell you where to look, but will never presume to imagine what you'll find. Such a reductive way to share words, "explaining" a rich poem.

You're welcome. Dive in.

* Source attributed to many: jury's out.

** "Wild Is The Wind," Carl Philips. Excerpt.

John says

a wordsmith excellence

Lee Razer says

“But what hasn’t been damaged? History here means a history of storms rushing the trees for so long, their bowed shapes seem a kind of star - worth trusting, I mean, as in how the helmsman, steering home, knows what star to lean on.” - SWIMMING

“Don’t you see how you’ve burnt almost all of it, all the tenderness, away, someone screams to someone else, in public - and looking elsewhere, we walk quickly past, as if even to have heard that much might have put us at risk of whatever fate questions like that spring from.” - MONOMOY

“Two points make a line - but so does one point, surely, when pulled at once in two opposed directions: how to turn away from what’s familiar, for example, toward what isn’t defines hope well enough, but can define, too, despair...” - THAT IT MIGHT SAVE, OR DROWN THEM

Margaryta says

Phillips is certainly very talented with how he phrases his ideas - there was a flow from one line to another on the level of language. However, I couldn't say the same emotionally. "Wild is the Wind" left me feeling disconnected from the poems. I wasn't able to approach them and, in some cases, couldn't follow along with them. The wording that I think is Phillips' strength also got in the way sometimes, and in some cases I wondered what the reason, if any, for his stylistic choices were. I wasn't left with an overall impression of the collection, which was the most worrying, and almost all the poems left me unchanged. Perhaps I read this incorrectly - that is, didn't take the time or wasn't as patient as I ideally should've been. It's probably something wrong on my end if I couldn't appreciate an acclaimed poet, or see what was so spectacular about his work.

Andy Oram says

I find something in Carl Phillips's poems that says to others, "This is how to achieve what you are seeking through poetry." Many contemporary poets string together casual but carefully crafted phrases that seem unrelated, but that in some deep sense tell a story. Phillips seems to make that real, whereas others are just mostly off virtuosic displays of language. Phillips doesn't indulge in lot of modifiers or other scene-painting, but knows how to craft the fumbling, ambivalent phrases of everyday life, such as "more often than not," into lyricism. The poems are worth savoring slowly (I admit I did). Most are short, making them fast reading but reinforcing their richness. I find a simple, short poem such as "Gold Leaf" a deep commentary on my own life. I will definitely check out some of his Phillips's other books.

Caroline Gerardo says

Don't you know you're
Life itself

Like a leaf clings
To the tree
Oh my darling,
Cling to me
For we're like creatures
Of the wind
Wild is the wind
Wild is the wind
You
Touch me
I hear the sound
Of mandolins
You
Kiss me
With your kiss

by Dimitri Tiomkin and Ned Washington

The title made popular first by Johnny Mathis and then into stellar status by David Bowie Phillips' book of poems takes the heart through the physics of the foils, drag, and speed of love. He points the sail not too close to the wind, but shows us the map to direct ourselves. Don't hesitate. Don't trust your memory of loss or astronomy. Rather than the kite of the sail be a swallow tailed kite of your life. Our time on this earth is only a moment, I bought two - one to carry and allow the unsacred dirt of my days, dog tail the pages, and one I gave to my sister who needed the joy.
Bravo

Lou Last says

What the Lost Are For

Here, before these shadows that,
in their disappearing, returning,
then falling as softly again
elsewhere, have sometimes
seemed the first and last lesson
left on the nature of power, though
they are not that, I bow my head,

I bend my knee. I hardly care,
I think, anymore who goes there,
only let me pass—however
flawed—among them, my fears
not stripped from me, but kept
hidden as, more often than not,
just beneath stamina, somewhere

grace, too, lies hidden. Nobody
speaks to me as you do. Nowhere

water-lit do the leaves pale faster.

*

Melinda says

April was National Poetry month, and both of my elementary school aged children explored the genre with their teachers. And for an unknown reason this slim book of poetry arrived on my hold shelf at the library. Poetry has never been something I devoured in reading material, but this was a pleasant book to explore more of the genre. Each poem is two pages or less, so it's perfect to pick up at the end of the day or when you want to squeeze in 15 minutes of reading. Overall I liked the nature theme throughout the poems, but they left me with a sense of being dark and heavy.

John Taylor says

This will likely be my favorite book of the year. I don't know any other poet who so carefully and gently holds the reader within the speaker's own point of view, including all doubts, uncertainties, and fears that come with that view.

From "Brothers in Arms," "I've always thought / gratitude's the one correct response to having been made, / however painfully, to see this life more up close."

From "Not the Waves as They Make Their Way Forward," "Marcus Aurelius wrote down / some thoughts meant apparently only for himself, though / they became *Meditations*...It begin with gratitude. / How it ends is painful, if I'm remembering right. But it isn't pain."

This sequence reminded me so much of Randall Jarrell's "90 North." The end goes, "I see at last that all the knowledge // I wrung from the darkness—that the darkness flung me— / Is worthless as ignorance: nothing comes from nothing, / The darkness from the darkness. Pain comes from the darkness / And we call it wisdom. It is pain."

I think both Phillips and Jarrell can live side by side as they take on pain from different angles, but I was heartened by Phillips's move to, however small, reclaim pain from the meaningless. Pain may not be wisdom in and of itself, but it can lead to not pain, can lead to gratitude and clarity.

Kim says

Here we have a whirlwind of mindful themes and conjunctions: gratitude and despair, hope and suffering, debt and freedom. This lively collection wrestles with being half-empty -- the revelation that redemption is not possible, but you still have to sit with a life force, make do with your flesh.

There's something uplifting about knowing/understanding the depth of your despair. Is hope a star, waiting

for us to calculate its light years? It isn't an immutable beacon, says the wind. It comes and goes.

I still don't "get" prose-poetry. Sometimes contemporary verse feels like it's all written by the same person, splicing sentences and line breaks onto single pages and tweets. Sometimes I yearn for a longer, complex narrative poem. What is taken to be the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings today, is more of the same spoken rhythm. In "If you will, I will", the speaker fancies "a wreckage I can manage myself". A few lines down, the speaker says "I'll never stop courting recklessness" -- a kind of bizarre game with a self-destructive bent. The poem's familiar intimacy comes from the speaker's "distracted" tug-job like rhythm: "intimacy seems nothing more, anymore, than / a form of letting what's been simple enough become difficult, / because now less far. The opening "urgency" evolves into a pornographic cleansing ritual. As the speaker "gets harder", the aim is to climax, with a little help from this male friend. Finally, the sense of an ending is ambiguous, as we learn there may not be another "he", just the speaker's italicised self, a fashioned mirror.

Luke Gorham says

Linguistically masterful and Melvillian, reveling in the extension and layering of thoughts through stacked clauses and pseudo-digressive asides. Meditative in nature, which is both refreshing in spurts and also lacking a bit of cohesion as a whole. This is considered, philosophical poetry; not unemotional and not even only secondarily so, but always filtered through a headiness that, while always technically impressive (I can't emphasize enough how par excellence the wordsmithery is here), can create a bit of a remove experientially. In the same way, works best as poetry to appreciate rather than to fully, heartfully adore.
