



Western Wind: An Introduction to Poetry

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WESTERN WIND is an introduction to the elements of craft that make poetry sing, a superior anthology of classic and contemporary poetry, and a guide for students to poetics, writing about poetry, and critical theory. In this text, two well respected poets bring their love of the craft of poetry into a book that teaches as well as inspires. The text also includes exercises, chapter summaries, games, diagrams, illustrations, and 4-color reproductions of great works of art.

Western Wind: An Introduction to Poetry Details

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E says

It may be an introduction to poetry, but this book proves useful whether it's the first or last thing you read on the subject. I regularly dip into it to stretch new muscles I'd never before been aware of. It doesn't need to be read straight through and for that reason alone it should be a regular reference on everyone's shelf, right next to their dictionary. That said, I doubt that is likely to happen.

In our modern culture there seems to be a kneejerk reaction against learning "about" poetry and writing. As the authors point out, no one would ridicule someone wanting to repair their own car for learning all the technical jargon and mechanical concepts, yet conventional wisdom dictates that anyone should be able to write a story or rhyme, and words like "hyperbole" are for ivory tower snobs. History has certainly proven that illiterate or minimally educated individuals can and have composed exquisite and soul-jarring poetry, but there need not be a battle between those advocating for and against education on the arts. Education is only bad when it is seen as automatic credentials. In art of course there is no such thing as credentials.

Anyone can create poetry, but with the background this book offers, a reader/listener/composer is more likely to be cognizant of intricate detail and will appreciate a stunning feat all the more. No one has to love Shakespeare, but it is useful to understand why so many people do.

Danielle Chappell says

I absolutely love this book. It uses clear examples of poems to illustrate poetic devices and there are really good, concise introductions before each poem. I use this book to teach high school English and it's a constant resource for me.

Margaret says

This was my poetry textbook in college in 1990 or so. It was OK then; I wasn't much of a poetry fan but as an English major I had to read some. But I enjoyed it a lot more this time around: I didn't have to read it! My kids are reading it now as part of their homeschool work; I read along with them so we can discuss it. One likes it more than the other. If you knew them, you could guess which was which. :-)

Tameca says

I am re-reading this for a poetry class this semester.

This is one of those books that makes me feel giddy inside. Many of the poetry "manuals" and text books I have come across are quite disjointed, confusing and incomplete in their explanations of forms, meters and

such. At times some of these books feel high-falluting. Western Wind is a book I can consult again and again. It's a book that speaks plainly about poetry and inspires the poet in anyone. The book houses great examples and great information, to boot. I love the questions the book puts forth in its introduction. For example: "Why do charms against the devil fail to work in translation?...What kind of rhyme is like a blue note in music?..." The book goes beyond the study of forms, meter, and all the other poetry related terms one can glean from books such as Turco's The Book of Forms (which I own, consult often, but still find confusing in the way it's set up, and even in its examples. I have to often look up examples of my own).

A quote from the intro:

"...poetry comes before prose does. It is closer than prose to the origins of language. We can even say it's more natural..."

As a musician and someone who considers herself a practicing poet, this passage really hits home for me, and it is one of the many reasons I get giddy reading this book. With this passage alone, I am reminded that poetry is important. Further, it can inform other genres, building writerly skills that only make any writers' work stronger, more potent, poignant and full of music.

Speaking of music...

there is a whole section of the book dedicated to the sounds of poetry alone. Within that section is a section about poetry's "music."

Emily says

A book that helps you understand the anatomy of a poem and the effect of each element on the whole. Not afraid to identify bad habits to avoid. A great resource for writers and readers of poetry.

Carrie says

This is a good starter for understanding how to write a poem.

Charles says

A tight description of the the mechanics of poetry with emphasis on the modern and many masterful examples for the beginner, novice or master poet, student, teacher, or reader to absorb. Quality examples from masters and critics complement the anthology within.

AnnaRae Martin says

:)

Miguel Vega says

I was reading this one for a while, ever since it was assigned for Uni, and it has a lot of really good poetry in here. My favorites are for sure the poems by T.S. Elliot whom I was introduced to through this class.

Jeanie Morkel says

Brilliant and lovely. The knowledge and refined sensitivity to poetry which I gained from studying this book is invaluable.

Arlene S says

Book blurb: "elements of craft that make poetry sing".

Matt says

Worked on this book for over a year for a Writing Poetry class through BYU Independent Study.

Jan says

I have never liked poetry. But after finishing my poetry class, I am sold--hook, line, and sinker. Who knew I would fall in love with the English language so deeply. And to think I actually have a favorite poet--it would have to be E.E. Cummings. Yes, there is still junk poetry out there, but at least now I'm willing to listen to the wind as it rushes by.

Mmars says

If I was deserted on an island and could only have one book. I think this would be it.

Somewhere this was highly recommended for learning about poetry. So when I began to love and read poetry and wanted to delve deeper this is the book that got me going. I admit that I haven't read the whole thing, because it is an introduction but it's also very thorough. Introduction is actually a code word for textbook. But don't let that scare you away. I find it readable and endlessly enlightening. It's a great introduction. Mason quickly deepens your reading by beginning with the role of the senses in imagery. He instantly helps you immerse yourself in the process.

Sectional headings are the senses, the emotions, the words, the sounds, the rhythms, and the mind. Poetry is explained. Poetic terms are defined and accompanied with clear examples. This can at times be a little bit of slog, but each section contains so much more.

An anthology of 250 poems follows the text - which also includes poems/excerpts.

If I have any criticism, it's that there's little post-modern material here, some classical, but heavily modern. But then, that's the poetry I most like. And a study of post-modern poetry is, to me, a book in itself.

Everytime I pick this book up my love for poetry deepens.

Audi Martel says

I have the 1970s edition of this book and it's one of the best poetry books I've ever read. I was inspired and constantly compelled to write/try different poetry styles and techniques. Halfway through, I even limited my reading to 5-10 pages a day just to savor it . I highly recommend this book. I'm sad to put it back up on my shelf.
