



On Poetry

Glyn Maxwell

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"This is a book for anyone," Glyn Maxwell declares of *On Poetry*. A guide to the writing of poetry and a defense of the art, it will be especially prized by writers and readers who wish to understand why and how poetic technique matters. When Maxwell states, "With rhyme what matters is the distance between rhymes" or "the line-break *is* punctuation," he compresses into simple, memorable phrases a great deal of practical wisdom.

In seven chapters whose weird, gnomic titles announce the singularity of the book--"White," "Black," "Form," "Pulse," "Chime," "Space," and "Time"--the poet explores his belief that the greatest verse arises from a harmony of mind and body, and that poetic forms originate in human necessities: breath, heartbeat, footstep, posture. "The sound of form in poetry descended from song, molded by breath, is the sound of that creature yearning to leave a mark. The meter says *tick-tock*. The rhyme says *remember*. The whiteness says *alone*," Maxwell writes. To illustrate his argument, he draws upon personal touchstones such as Emily Dickinson and Robert Frost. An experienced teacher, Maxwell also takes us inside the world of the creative writing class, where we learn from the experiences of four aspiring poets.

"You master form you master time," Maxwell says. In this guide to the most ancient and sublime of the realms of literature, Maxwell shares his mastery with us.

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