

[PDF] The Poetry Home Repair Manual: Practical Advice For Beginning Poets

Ted Kooser - pdf download free book

Books Details:

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Author: Ted Kooser

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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Now the 13th Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress, the Iowa-born, Nebraska-based Kooser has 40 years' experience in constructing verse. Like Wallace Stevens, Kooser was for many years an insurance executive, and begins chapter one with the following admonition: "You'll never be able to make a living writing poems." The soundness of that advice sets the tone for this no-nonsense book, which "advocates for poems that can be read and understood without professional interpretation." To that end, he offers plenty of examples from contemporary poets like Jane Hirschfield and B.H. Fairchild (as well as from his own work), explaining uses of rhyme, meter, imagery and other fundamentals without resorting to overly technical language. He stresses the use of judicious detail (which has its source in close

observation), and shows, with subtlety, how and when one might shift from metaphor to simile, or vice versa. The last of 12 chapters stresses time as the greatest help in editing: "leave your poem alone until it looks as if someone else might have written it." Perhaps the most important feature of the book is Kooser's voice, which comes through clearly and evenly, with little patience for cant, but a clear desire to advise those starting down a largely thankless path. "The truth is," he writes, "nobody's waiting for you to press your poetry into their hands."

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From The work of Kooser, America's new poet laureate, will be receiving more attention now, attention that is amply deserved. As this collection of essays shows, he is a generous presence in the poetic world, one who feels that poets' "job description" (which he discusses in the book's first essay) is not to make money or even fame, but to "serve the poems we write." While encouraging poets to think of their audience as they write, and to revise toward intelligibility, he does not prescribe who that audience will be. His own work tends toward the rural and populist, but he does not disdain those whose audience will be urban and urbane. Rather, he urges poets to focus on the work of poetry rather than on the idea of being a poet. His advice, useful to poets at any level of achievement, includes both broad and specific ideas on revising, and enlightening discussion of matters ranging from the often-underestimated power of simile to employing narrative effectively.

Patricia Monaghan

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