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The Best 100 Poems Of Gwen Harwood



Synopsis

O could one write as one makes love when all is given and nothing kept, then language might put by at last its coy elisions and inept withdrawals, yield, and yielding cast aside like useless clothes the crust of worn and shabby use, and trust its candour to the urgent mind its beauty to the searching tongue. Gwen Harwood's work is defined by a moving sensuality, a twinkling irreverence and a sly wit. This anthology brings together the best 100 of her poems, as selected and compiled by her son, the writer John Harwood. • - Peter Porter • Gwen Harwood's poetry is widely recognised for its stark intimacy and brilliant resonance • - The Sydney Morning Herald Gwen Harwood, one of Australia's most celebrated poets and librettists, published over 420 works in her lifetime, many of which continue to be studied widely in schools and universities across Australia. She received numerous awards and prizes, including the Patrick White Award and the Victorian Premier's Literary Award, and became an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in 1989. She died in 1995, aged seventy-five.

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Poetry

Customer Reviews

I continue to learn, one by one, that Australia has produced some very good poets. My latest Down Under discovery has been Gwen Harwood (b. 1920, d. 1995). She published nearly 400 poems. Her son, writer John Harwood, selected the contents of this book as her 100 best. It serves as a good introduction to Harwood; more important, it contains some fine poems. All of Harwood's poems have at least some structure or form, and many employ rhyme. There are even some sonnets. Here is one, entitled "In the Park": She sits in the park. Her clothes are out of date. Two children whine and bicker, tug her skirt. A third draws aimless patterns in the dirt. Someone she loved once passes by -- too late to feign indifference to that casual nod. "How nice," et cetera. "Time holds great surprises." From his neat head unquestionably rises a small balloon . . . "but for the grace of God . . . " They stand awhile in flickering light, rehearsing the children's names and birthdays. "It's so sweet to hear their chatter, watch them grow and thrive," she says to his departing smile. Then, nursing the youngest child, sits staring at her feet. To the wind she says, "They have eaten me alive." "Brutal" was the assessment of a friend. It is more trenchant than virtually all literature (or what passed for literature) later produced by the "women's liberation" movement. Most of Harwood's poetry is centered on personal experiences and relationships.

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