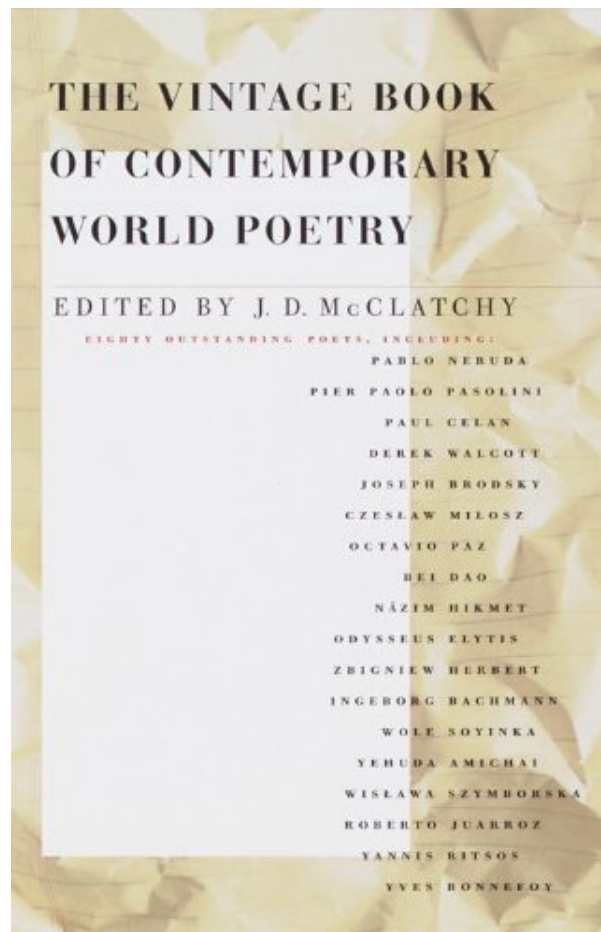


THE VINTAGE BOOK OF CONTEMPORARY WORLD POETRY BY J.D. MCCLATCHY



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THE VINTAGE BOOK OF CONTEMPORARY WORLD POETRY

EDITED BY J. D. McCLATCHY

EIGHTY OUTSTANDING POETS, INCLUDING:

PABLO NERUDA

PIER PAOLO PASOLINI

PAUL CELAN

DEREK WALCOTT

JOSEPH BRODSKY

CZESLAW MILOSZ

OCTAVIO PAZ

BEI DAO

NÁZIM HIKMET

ODYSSEUS ELYTIS

ZBIGNIEW HERBERT

INGEBORG BACHMANN

WOLE SOYINKA

YEHUDA AMICHAI

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From Publishers Weekly

A number of editorial decisions prevent this collection from living up to its name. McClatchy, editor of The Yale Review, has decided to exclude "the extraordinary body of contemporary poetry in English," i.e., the work of poets from Britain, Ireland, the U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand on the grounds that this work is "more readily available." The collection does embrace, however, poems written in English by such poets as Derek Walcott and Wole Soyinka, for whom the language is, as McClatchy notes, a "colonial bequest." While this decision may make sense for the U.K. and the U.S., it's hard to think of a New Zealand poet whose work is as readily available as, say, Pablo Neruda's, whose work is admitted. But whatever the book may lack in editorial vision, it does provide a respectable sampling of some of the best-known poets of our day, e.g., Czeslaw Milosz and Zbigniew Herbert, as well as a large number of poets whose work is less familiar, from Denmark's Henrik Nordbrandt to Japan's Ryuichi Tamura. Perhaps the most striking aspect of the collection is the number of poets here whose dissident beliefs and writings have led to imprisonment or exile. Among them are Dennis Brutus in South Africa and Nguyen Chi Thien in Vietnam. They serve as a potent reminder that in some parts of the world poetry and principle remain matters of life and death.

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This groundbreaking volume may well be the poetry anthology for the global village. As selected by J.D. McClatchy, this collection includes masterpieces from four continents and more than two dozen languages in translations by such distinguished poets as Elizabeth Bishop, W.S. Merwin, Ted Hughes, and Seamus Heaney. Among the countries and writers represented are:

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Chile--Pablo Neruda
China--Bei Dao, Shu Ting
El Salvador--Claribel Alegria
France--Yves Bonnefoy
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India--A.K. Ramanujan
Israel--Yehuda Amichai
Japan--Shuntaro Tanikawa
Mexico--Octavio Paz
Nicaragua--Ernesto Cardenal
Nigeria--Wole Soyinka
Norway--Tomas Transtromer
Palestine--Mahmoud Darwish
Poland--Zbigniew Herbert, Czeslaw Milosz
Russia--Joseph Brodsky, Yevgeny Yevtushenko
Senegal--Leopold Sedar Senghor
South Africa--Breyten Breytenbach
St. Lucia, West Indies--Derek Walcott

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18 of 19 people found the following review helpful.

Poetry Worth Reading from around the World

By Kevin Christianson

A solid selection of poems written by major poets from around the globe. Diverse cultures represented. The quality of the translations is very good, making the poems accessible to English-speaking readers. One recurrent problem: no explanatory notes are provided to help English-speakers, particularly younger readers and college students, grasp the historical, political, social, or cultural allusions in some poems. For example, the Viet Nam poet Nguyen's "Model Citizens of the Regime" takes on fuller meaning if the reader knows that the "jail" referred to in the poem is not a penal institution for criminals but actually a communist re-education camp to which Vietnamese children were sent to be indoctrinated in Marxist ideology. Having a

bit of this geopolitical, social, or cultural context, readers can gain a fuller understanding of the poems. One small complaint: the anthology was published prior to the Polish poet Wislawa Szymborska's receipt of the Nobel Prize, and therefore the head note for her selection does not make note of that honor. Given the general lack of interest in poetry, especially poetry from other countries, we're nonetheless lucky to have this anthology.

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

Another gem

By Jazzy Jake

Given the daunting task of selecting from, literally, a world of poets, McClatchy succeeds admirably. Once again his editing has me running out to buy individual books by the poets in the anthology.

Now if he would do a book of "Contemporary English Language [But Non-American] Poetry" to offer closure....

An aspect of McClatchy's editing that I like is that the selection per poet is large enough to get a good introduction - the opposite is a fault of most anthologies - though this does cause worthy poets to be excluded.

I would love for some publisher to publish this and Contemporary American Poetry in good hardbound versions. They are prized members of my library, but, sadly, are not durable.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Best International Poetry Anthology

By Linda Johnsen

Anthologies, especially those of translated poetry, often disappoint. Not so here. McClatchy has collected an amazing assortment of first rate work, top poems by top international poets, reshaped into English by the capable hands of top translators. Superb.

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