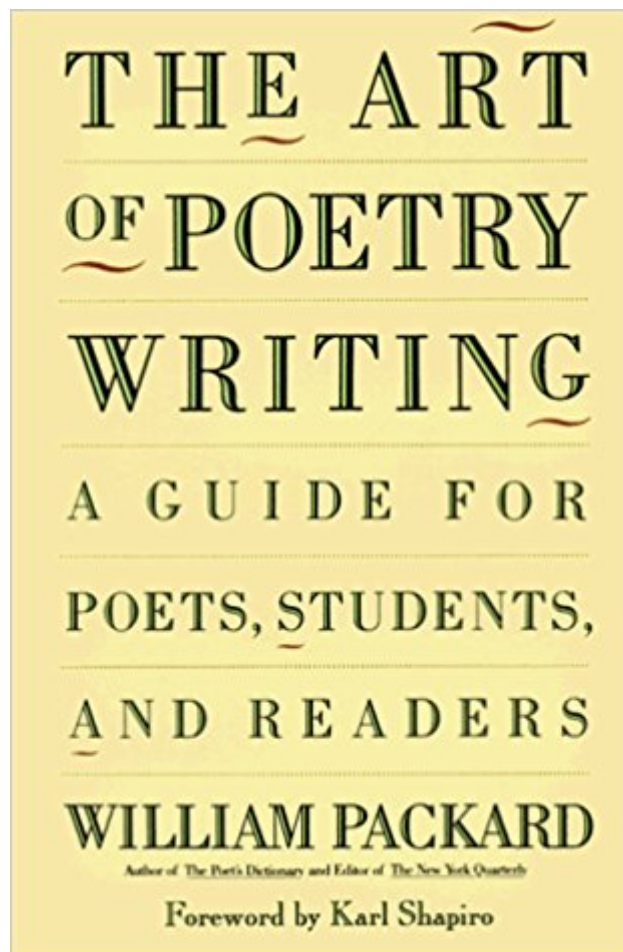




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The Art Of Poetry Writing: A Guide For Poets, Students, & Readers



Synopsis

Poet, novelist, scholar, translator, playwright, and teacher, William Packard has known every side of a writer's life. As founder and editor of The New York Quarterly, a national magazine devoted to the craft of poetry, he reads some 50,000 poems each year-most of them sadly deficient in sound, metrics, form, voice, and quality. This book is written to help poets address the central concerns of their craft and art. Lively, inspiring, opinionated, and sometimes curmudgeonly, *The Art of Poetry Writing* covers a broad range of topics, both technical and personal, that all poets need to consider:-Poetic devices and diction-Verse forms and free verse-Rhyme and metrics-Creative vision and revision-The benefits and problems of workshops and writing classes-30 writing challenges to develop form and style and technique-When to seek publication-and when not to-What to read while writing-The life of the poet, including keeping a journal, giving readings, applying for grants, and more. Remarks by and excerpts from the work of Coleridge, Wordsworth, Keats, Dickinson, Yeats, Auden, Stevens, Moore, Thomas, Ginsberg, Sexton, Plath, Dickey, Bukowski, Ashbery, and dozens of other poets make this an essential companion for students, teachers and anyone who writes or reads poetry.

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Customer Reviews

"By now the number of how-to books about poetry is beyond count, yet there is hardly a classic among them. Packard's book qualifies." --Karl Shapiro
"William Packard surely must be one of the great editors of our time." --James Dickey

William Packard is the author of *The Poet's Dictionary*, an A-Z reference of poetic devices, and *The Poet's Craft*, a collection of interviews with poets originally published in *The New York Quarterly*. He has been a professor of poetry at New York University for over twenty-five years, working with thousands of students; in his work with *The New York Quarterly* he has interviewed hundreds of practicing poets on the issues discussed in this book. He lives in New York City.

Auden recounts a tale of two teachers walking through a wood in the spring. The first quotes Wordsworth: O cuckoo shall I call thee bird or but a wandering voice. The second adds: State the alternative preferred with reasons for your choice. If the author of this skit was Housmann (so says Stephen Fry), little has changed in the century or so between our respective school days. Would-be teachers of poetry now being just as glib, just as clinical, and every bit as dull as their predecessors. The exception being that nowadays the second teacher would be read as some sort of ironic/sarcastic, self-referential postmodernist. He would though remain glib, clinical and dull, with the addition of becoming an incredible imbecile as well. Packard is no imbecile. He is droll where others are glib, expansive where they are clinical, he is intelligent, insightful and very far from dull. What he has achieved is commendable. The mechanics of a poem can be analysed and poured over and they have been by all and sundry. Those technical aspects however, can't be treated adequately in isolation from the vision of the poem; its soul. To me this is what makes teaching poetry the most unenviable task. I know of no one who has been able to, in short, or at length, capture the essence of creating poetry, the 'art' of it, not as I understand it. Certainly not great poetry. And by that I mean simply poetry that has the power to exalt. Packard has approached this task as well as anyone. Having done so he is in rare company. Mary Oliver comes to mind. Strange that they should both be North American. Perhaps Europeans aren't quite so fearless. Or perhaps Europeans know better than to tread where angels wouldn't be caught dead?

Like most poets I own many books about the writing process. Why buy another one? This book was recommended to me by the *New York Quarterly*. When it arrived, I read it at once. And then I read it again...and again. I love this book! It is a summary of everything a writer needs to know about poetry and the poetic process. What impressed me most is that, rather than reading a book, I felt as though I were having a conversation with the author, William Packard. A bonus is that the book contains a chapter of excellent poetry prompts! I plan to use this book when I give presentations on poetry. All right, so I won't keep it under my pillow. But close by. It's a keeper.

Just as many other 5 star reviews. Enjoyed reading this book.

This book is a clear, concise guide to writing and reading poetry, starting with a brief introduction of the history of poetry. The author provides explanations of devices, examples of verse forms, and writing prompts.

Excellent book for poetry lovers, gibves nuts and bolts and beauty.

A great learning experience

Incredible. They said it was like new. It was definitely like new.

On the dust jacket of this book, the word "curmudgeonly" is used. Don't bother to look it up, just read on and you'll get the idea. He begins with an overview of the history of poetry - very interesting and very informative - and then moves on to discuss the pros and cons of various schools of thought. Again, interesting and informative. He is however, quite merciless in his criticism of the things he dislikes - his section on Poetry Workshops is a good example. Unfortunately, you get the impression that he doesn't have much time for us ordinary human beings who find writing poetry a satisfying experience without actually aspiring to the Pulitzer Prize. And while it is true that he addresses issues like 'when to seek publication', 'how to apply for grants' etc etc, he doesn't actually give you much information! A good book as an overview of the history and purpose of poetry, with some excellent exercises ("triggers"). Not however a book for someone starting out in poetry, or for anyone who has even the slightest doubt about their own abilities as a poet.

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