



An Introduction to Poetry: The River Sings

By Jeff Knorr

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Breaking barriers and cultivating a lifelong love of poetry, this practical guide to reading poetry is set up to provide a background in analyzing poems, applying literary theory, forming opinions and offers approaches to discussing and writing about poetry. The volume teaches readers how a writer works so that they can feel more comfortable reading poems. The author examines survivalist poetics, how readers and writers work, literary criticism, how a poem is built; metaphor, symbol, and point of view, sound and the poem, shaping the currents of poetry, reading a poem, writers on writing, and provides poems for further reading. For those looking for an accessible introduction to poetry.

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

AN INTRODUCTION TO POETRY: THE RIVER SINGS by Jeff Knorr provides readers and teachers of poetry with a book that explores the poem, its parts, and ways of reading a poem in a practical manner. The poems included in this slim guide become living texts for students to study the key elements of poetry and to enhance their critical reading strategies.

An excellent text or supplement for introduction to poetry, introduction to literature, and creative writing.

About the Author

Jeff Knorr is the author of two collections of poetry, *STANDING UP TO THE DAY* and *WESTERN REACH*. He is also the co-author of *MOORING AGAINST THE TIDE: WRITING POETRY AND FICTION* (Prentice Hall), the co-editor of *A WRITERS COUNTRY* (Prentice Hall), and the author of *AN INTRODUCTION TO POETRY: THE RIVER SINGS* (Prentice Hall). He was the founding co-editor and poetry editor of the *Clackamas Review*, *Red Rock Review*, and *Oxford Magazine*, as well as others. Jeff Knorr currently lives in California's central valley and teaches literature and writing at Sacramento City College.

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When Prentice Hall Editor, Carrie Brandon first approached me about this book, we were sitting at a conference in Kansas City talking poetry, teaching, reading, and how we've both come to have a love for literature, language, and reading. The more we talked, the conversation drifted toward how that happened, from our parents reading to us when we were children to having teachers in our lives who made books, stories, and literature a real and powerful event. In the course of that conversation, we also talked about why so many people come out of their varied academic backgrounds with a love for reading fiction and non-fiction but not poetry. And, of course, there has been much written about this by poets like Billy Collins, Delmore Schwartz, and Julia Alvarez. And possibly Robert Pinsky's poetry project served to remedy this in some way. So, the intent of this book is to break the barrier—whatever that barrier is, as it might vary for each person—to unlock some secret inside poetry.

This book is set up to: provide a background in reading poetry, analyze poems, apply literary theory, form opinions, and offer approaches to discuss and write about poetry. But, it is also designed to teach students of poetry about how a writer works and that if we understand how a writer works we might, as a reader, feel more comfortable reading poems. So, the hope is to provide an academic experience and to cultivate a lifelong love of poetry. In his essay, "The Specialization of Poetry," Wendell Berry says that "poetry remains a specialized art, its range and influence so constricted that poets have very nearly become their own audience." With hope, there is a selection of poetry here that speaks to the reader and says *poetry is not constricted*. And my hope is that the approach to reading poetry—for academic assignments, analysis, or leisure—is one which allows for poetry to be viewed as something other than a specialized art form that is only comprehensible to poets, critics, and studied academics.

As poets, should we withdraw from responsibility all that is not comprehended in our work? Most definitely not; hence, poets ought to move toward a writing, which offers the public a view of themselves and their

histories, straddling the line between accessible and challenging. Asserting at this lack of responsibility has taken place in some instances, this book seeks to offer a palette of poets and approaches to reading poems that not only offers the public as subject but hopes for it to be the welcome and comfortable audience of the art. However, do not let that statement be taken as a "sit back in your easy chair and read on, Dear Reader" comment. Rather, put on your running shoes and get ready to chase the dog.

One problem, which seems to exist in many introduction to literature survey courses, or an introduction to poetry course, is that students are not only confused by poetry, but they're uncomfortable reading it aloud—no one has spent time offering them tips on reading it but has only read it to them. Literally, students often do not know how to make it come out of their mouths. Hence, in the chapter on reading a poem, "From Page to Mouth to Ear" students have some tips on getting a poem off the page and comfortably, confidently reading. What's more, for you students, during the writing of this book I had a constant companion of a composite college student. Sometimes it was a young man and sometimes a young woman. And I had a fine "standard" composite college apartment. And it was from that apartment that I wrote with this student talking to me, looking over my shoulder and directing me. For this, I hope you find the book conversational, interesting, and different than you've encountered before. *The River Sings* is intended to be a practical guide to reading poetry. This book will help instructors illustrate that there are no secret handshakes; that poetry is not a conspiracy against the reader; and that in fact students can enjoy and be comfortable within poetic language.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Freddie Patton:

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Syble Mills:

Playing with family in a park, coming to see the coastal world or hanging out with friends is thing that usually you could have done when you have spare time, subsequently why you don't try factor that really opposite from that. One activity that make you not experiencing tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition info. Even you love An Introduction to Poetry: The River Sings, you are able to enjoy both. It is good combination right, you still want to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh occur its mind hangout people. What? Still don't understand it, oh come on its named reading friends.

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