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Poetry and the Age

Randall Jarrell

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About Poetry and the Age:

"Perhaps the most comprehensive and certainly the most detailed of all studies of modern poetry."-- Delmore Schwartz, *New York Times Book Review*

"Randall Jarrell's book about poetry and the criticism of poetry pulls the bung-cork out of the barrel. The reader is exhilarated, led on to agree with Mr. Jarrell joyfully, even to cap his opinions--and at last to grow reckless. . . . *Poetry and the Age* is enormously readable."-- Louis Simpson, *The American Scholar*

"The most powerful reviewer of poetry active in this country for the last decade. . . . Everybody interested in modern poetry ought to be grateful to him." -- John Berryman, *New Republic*

Randall Jarrell was the critic whose taste defined American poetry after World War II. Poetry and the Age, his first collection of criticism, was published in 1953. It has been in and out of print over the past 40 years and has become a classic of American letters. In this new edition, two long-lost lectures by Jarrell have been added. Recently discovered by critics, they speak to issues at the heart of Jarrell's criticism: the structure of poetry and the question "Is American poetry American?"

One of the outstanding poets of the postwar generation, Jarrell was also celebrated for his extraordinary praise of some underappreciated older and younger poets and for his witty dismissals of current favorites he thought less qualified. *Poetry and the Age includes groundbreaking considerations of Walt Whitman and Robert Frost as well as profound appraisals of Wallace Stevens, Marianne Moore, John Crowe Ransom, and William Carlos Williams. His early reviews that established the reputations of Robert Lowell and Elizabeth Bishop are here, beside other enthusiastic discoveries that have withstood the test of time.*

Poetry and the Age also contains Jarrell's influential essays on the obscurity of poetry and on the age of criticism, essays that offer some of the most relevant and readable literary judgments of the 20th century.

Randall Jarrell (1914-1965) wrote eight books of poetry, five anthologies, four children's books illustrated by Maurice Sendak, four translations, including *Faust: Part I* and *The Three Sisters* (performed on Broadway by the Actor's Studio), and a novel, *Pictures from an Institution*. He received the National Book Award for poetry in 1960, served as poet laureate at the Library of Congress in 1957 and 1958, and taught for many years at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro. He was a member of the American Institute of Arts and Letters.

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