



The Yeats Reader, Revised Edition: A Portable Compendium of Poetry, Drama, and Prose

W.B. Yeats

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Throughout his long life, William Butler Yeats -- Irish writer and premier lyric poet in English in this century -- produced important works in every literary genre, works of astonishing range, energy, erudition, beauty, and skill. His early poetry is memorable and moving. His poems and plays of middle age address the human condition with language that has entered our vocabulary for cataclysmic personal and world events. The writings of his final years offer wisdom, courage, humor, and sheer technical virtuosity. T. S. Eliot pronounced Yeats "the greatest poet of our time -- certainly the greatest in this language, and so far as I am able to judge, in any language" and "one of the few whose history is the history of their own time, who are a part of the consciousness of an age which cannot be understood without them."

The Yeats Reader is the most comprehensive single volume to display the full range of Yeats's talents. It presents more than one hundred and fifty of his best-known poems -- more than any other compendium -- plus eight plays, a sampling of his prose tales, and excerpts from his published autobiographical and critical writings. In addition, an appendix offers six early texts of poems that Yeats later revised. Also included are selections from the memoirs left unpublished at his death and complete introductions written for a projected collection that never came to fruition. These are supplemented by unobtrusive annotation and a chronology of the life.

Yeats was a protean writer and thinker, and few writers so thoroughly reward a reader's efforts to essay the whole of their canon. This volume is an excellent place to begin that enterprise, to renew an old acquaintance with one of world literature's great voices, or to continue a lifelong interest in the phenomenon of literary genius.

The Yeats Reader, Revised Edition: A Portable Compendium of Poetry, Drama, and Prose Details

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Greg says

Like most books of poetry, this is read one or two at a time. May never actually "finish" the book.

James says

I have enjoyed the poetry of William Butler Yeats for many years as evidenced by my well-worn copy of his Complete Poems. But there is more to enjoy when considering this protean author for throughout his long life, William Butler Yeats produced important works in every literary genre, works of astonishing range, energy, erudition, beauty, and skill. His early poetry is memorable and moving. His poems and plays of middle age address the human condition with language that has entered our vocabulary for cataclysmic personal and world events.

"O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,

How can we know the dancer from the dance?"

("Among School Children", p 105)

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Tiffany says

My favorite poem: Vacillation, Part IV. I loved the autobiographical writings, too.

Abby says

Ah, the incomparable Yeats. It was a pleasure to read him again as an adult and not in a university lecture.

The boldness of his language strikes me differently now.

Lauren says

William Butler Yeats is without a doubt one of, if not my absolute, favorite poets in the whole world. I also have found many times through this reader that he was a pretty brilliant playwright. I can say without a doubt sitting at Coole Park, reading some of the poetry that was written there is one of the most complete literary experiences I've had.

Kelly says

Read parts of this for my freshmen year Intro to Irish Lit class. The verdict's still out on what I really think of Yeats - hope to elaborate on that thought process in the future. Sometimes he speaks to me, and sometimes I don't have a clue what he's writing or why he wrote it.

Risa says

"The Yeats Reader: A Portable Compendium of Poetry, Drama, and Prose by W. B. Yeats (1997)"

Kelly says

five stars for yeats, but the organization of this book is less than desirable. any good editor of poetry will include an index of first lines to make your searching easier.

Sparkie Allison says

great collection of poetry, plays and more. I especially enjoyed the autobiographical writings that gave me a greater understanding of the man and his motivations. every time I read Yeats I have an urge to visit Ireland.

Rerity says

first poem

Tortla says

What I've read of his poetry is generally more earnest and less entrancing than I like. I keep getting irked by

the excessive italicization. And finding the repeated male perspectives on heterosexual relationships boring. One poem ("Ephemeral" was part or all of its title, I think) struck the right chord with me. But so far I can't bring myself to stop skimming and actually *read* the reader.

Maybe I just need to be in a more poetic mood...

EDIT:

Reading/skimming bits from "The Tower" evoked Eliot and Pound. The same highly-allusive attempt to incorporate himself into the world he imagines as classically intellectual (pretentious). Kind of more cryptic in its meaning (to me) and less frustratingly incomprehensible in its allusions (which don't degenerate into nonsense sounds or flaunt their allusiveness with unhelpful footnotes or make me feel alienated and dumb by being in Greek).
