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Collected Poems



Synopsis

Longlisted for the 2014 National Book Award Gathered here is a half century's magnificent work by the former poet laureate of the United States and Pulitzer Prize winner whose haunting and exemplary style has influenced an entire generation of American poets. Beginning with the limited-edition volume *Sleeping with One Eye Open*, published in 1964, Mark Strand was hailed as a poet of piercing originality and elegance, and in the ensuing decades he has not swerved from his vision of how a poem should be shaped and what it should deliver. As he entered the middle period of his career, with volumes such as *The Continuous Life* (1990), Strand was already well-known for his ability to capture the subtle music of consciousness, and for creating painterly physical landscapes that could answer to the inner self: "And here the dark infinitive to feel, / Which would endure and have the earth be still / And the star-strewn night pour down the mountains / Into the hissing fields and silent towns." In his later work, from *Blizzard of One* (1998) which won the Pulitzer Prize, through the sly, provocative riddles of his recent *Almost Invisible* (2012), Strand has delighted in reminding us that there is no poet quite like him for a dose of dark wit that turns out to be deep wisdom and self-deprecation. He has given voice to our collective imagination with a grandeur and comic honesty worthy of his great Knopf forebear Wallace Stevens. With this volume, we celebrate his canonical work. From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

Mark Strand died just a few months after this COLLECTED POEMS was issued. I remember asking

at the bookstore, Isn't Collected Poetry reserved for a posthumous anthology and Selected Poetry for a living poet? And the bookseller showed me a New York Times review which asked the same question. Well, I guess we have our answer. The poet was probably very sick, close to death as this volume was being prepared. But enough about the poet's death. MARK STRAND was the most vibrant and vital of men, and one of our best modern poets. He early on found his characteristic voice and developed a style to suit it - both unmistakably Strand. I suppose Wallace Stevens was his model, both poets skilled at tracing the mind's grasp of reality, both with an uncanny sense of the working of consciousness. If that sounds cerebral. it's the fault of my prose, because Mark Strand's poetry is anything but cerebral in impact. It is light, airy, incandescent, star-like and often very witty. He is able to make the most ordinary events seem unreal and the most unreal events everyday. Again and again he will amaze you with a view of things both reassuringly bizarre and dangerously ordinary. A Mark Strand poem opens the door of wonder and admits you to a new world for as long as you wish to stay. Buy his Collected Poems and you can come and go as you please - forever.

Mark Strand doesn't care what I think. He's dead. I only came to poetry late in my life (I'm 75) and I'm a composer and not terribly good with words. Strand plays with my mind in a strange way...not to be too corny, but sometimes my jaw drops at his insights. "How could he/she think of this" I often feel when listening to music I love. Strand is the first poet that has caused me this sensation...although I am very fond of other poets, especially Jennifer Grotz.

Buying for the poems. Mr. Strand approved the cover, and it is fine with me. His poems are accessible and deeply profound at once.

A wonderful, deep and profound poet who will be much missed, but thank God we have this superb collection of his work. It's one of those books you'll find yourself just dipping into for some inspiration or for a thought at random moments during the day. Kind of what I do with all my long poetry shelf. That's what poets do, yes? Inspire us, make us think differently about the most mundane bits of life in all its shading. That's Mark Strand to a T.

Mark Strand is one of the greatest poets I have ever read for. His poems are both simple in language and deep in meaning and insight. He never fails to speak to and unearth the humane elements in our psyches. I strongly recommend this book.

I got beat up by an obvious professor of Scandinavian Literature who didn't like my review of an award-winning Swede or Norwegian poet, translated by Robert Bly. Garbage in, garbage out. Mark Strand's poetry is what I prefer-sensible, understandable, poignant...just in case the know-it-all professor reads this review.

This is an amazing, profound and lyrical sequence of poetic observations, not verse but definitely poetry. It is a set of impressions written as descriptions and, to me, the poems communicate discovery of deep truth in experience.

I have a dog-eared copy of Strand's "Selected Poems" which I lost during a move along with the other books it was shipped with, thanks to the postal service. Had been meaning to replace it until I heard about the imminent publication of a "Collected Poems" edition...am very glad I waited! Most poets have a couple of really strong books, then spend the rest of their lives publishing subpar work for either contractual or egotistical reasons. I am happy to say that Strand is an exception. The style and content of his work does change over time, but doesn't significantly degrade in quality...he is as interesting and enjoyable to read in his late years as in his early-middle years, though perhaps a bit less readily accessible. Nevertheless, he remains without a doubt one of the very best contemporary American poets.

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