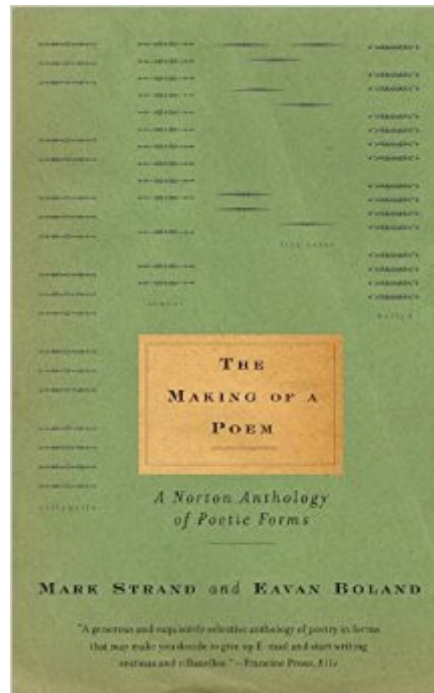


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The Making Of A Poem: A Norton Anthology Of Poetic Forms



Synopsis

"Concise, learned, revisionary... should enrich the passionate conversation about poetic forms for years to come." • Edward Hirsch, author of *How to Read a Poem and Fall in Love with Poetry* Two of our foremost poets provide here a lucid, straightforward primer that "looks squarely at some of the headaches and mysteries of poetic form": a book for readers who have always felt that an understanding of form (sonnet, ballad, villanelle, sestina, among others) would enhance their appreciation of poetry. Tracing "the exuberant history of forms," they devote one chapter to each form, offering explanation, close reading, and a rich selection of exemplars that amply demonstrate the power and possibility of that form.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is about writing poetry. It is not about the content of a poem, it is about the formal structure. The authors compile descriptions of seven poetic forms (eight, if you count stanza as a form, as the authors inexplicably do) and three thematic categories. Following each description is a long list of examples of the forms, from the point when each form entered English up to... well, up to... And that's where we run into the first problem with this book. There are good poets out there writing sonnets and sestinas today, but if the authors are to be believed, formal poetry came to a juddering halt when Robert Frost died. As a reader of poetry, I like Dylan Thomas, Robert Browning, and William Shakespeare, but if a student learning poetry uses this book as the yardstick of where these forms are right now, that student will at best be over forty years out of date. That's not to

suggest that the selections of poems in this book aren't good. They are. Not only do the compilers select the best poets of days gone by, but they select the best examples of the work of those poets. But the selection is slanted in favor of the past. To be really useful a book needs to include both a historical overview of a form and a synoptic look at where poetry lives right now. Likewise, the selection of forms is brief. I like villanelles and ballads as much as the next guy, but would it really break the editors to dedicate a little more space to ghazals, cinquains, triolets, and haiku? The selection of forms in this book is very introductory, limited to the forms the editors could find in English in profusion. Perhaps somebody fairly new to poetry, who hasn't learned what the forms are and how they work, will find this collection useful.

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