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The Virtues of Poetry (Paperback)

By Professor of English James Longenbach

Graywolf Press, United States, 2013. Paperback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. An illuminating look at the many forms of poetry's essential excellence by James Longenbach, a writer with an ear as subtle and assured as any American poet now writing (John Koethe) This book proposes some of the virtues to which the next poem might aspire: boldness, change, compression, dilation, doubt, excess, inevitability, intimacy, otherness, particularity, restraint, shyness, surprise, and worldliness. The word virtue came to English from Latin, via Old French, and while it has acquired a moral valence, the word in its earliest uses gestured toward a magical or transcendental power, a power that might be embodied by any particular substance or act. With vices I am not concerned. Unlike the short-term history of taste, which is fueled by reprimand or correction, the history of art moves from achievement to achievement. Contemporary embodiments of poetry's virtues abound, and only our devotion to a long history of excellence allows us to recognize them. -from James Longenbach's preface The Virtues of Poetry is a resplendent and ultimately moving work of twelve interconnected essays, each of which describes the way in which a particular excellence...


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