

Pugh

Ghosts and the Overplus

Reading Poetry in the Twenty-First Century

Ghosts and the Overplus is a celebration of lyric poetry in the twenty-first century and how lyric poetry incorporates the voices of our age as well as the poetic "ghosts" from the past. Acclaimed poet and award-winning teacher Christina Pugh is fascinated by how poems continually look backward into literary history. Her essays find new resonance in poets ranging from Emily Dickinson to Gwendolyn Brooks to the poetry of the now. Some of these essays also consider the way that poetry interacts with the visual arts, dance, and the decision to live life as a nonconformist. This wide-ranging collection showcases the critical discussions around poetry that happened in America over the first two decades of our current millennium. Essay topics include poetic forms continually in migration, such as the sonnet; poetic borrowings across visual art and dance; and the idiosyncrasies of poets who lived their lives against the grain of literary celebrity and trend. What unites all of these essays is a drive to dig more deeply into the poetic word and act: to go beyond surface reading in order to reside longer with poems. In essays both discursive and personal, Pugh shows that poetry asks us to think differently—in a way that gathers feeling into the realm of thought, thereby opening the mysteries that reside in us and in the world around us.

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