



New Collected Poems

Wendell Berry

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In Wendell Berry's upcoming *The New Collected Poems*, the poet revisits for the first time his immensely popular *Collected Poems*, which *The New York Times Book Review* described as "a straight-forward search for a life connected to the soil, for marriage as a sacrament and family life" that "affirms a style that is resonant with the authentic," and "[returns] American poetry to a Wordsworthian clarity of purpose."

In *The New Collected Poems*, Berry reprints the nearly two hundred pieces in *Collected Poems*, along with the poems from his most recent collections—*Entries*, *Given*, and *Leavings*—to create an expanded collection, showcasing the work of a man heralded by *The Baltimore Sun* as "a sophisticated, philosophical poet in the line descending from Emerson and Thoreau . . . a major poet of our time."

Wendell Berry is the author of over forty works of poetry, fiction, and non-fiction, and has been awarded numerous literary prizes, including the T.S. Eliot Award, a National Institute of Arts and Letters award for writing, the American Academy of Arts and Letters Jean Stein Award, and a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship. While he began publishing work in the 1960s, *Booklist* has written that "Berry has become ever more prophetic," clearly standing up to the test of time.

New Collected Poems Details

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From Reader Review New Collected Poems for online ebook

Vikki Marshall says

If there is such a thing as Father Earth, then this natural, mystic poet surely must be it. Berry's collected poems cover a significant time frame, spanning almost 40 years. We delve deep into American roots; we become farmers, family, lovers and caretakers of the land. Berry mourns for his fallen beloved, he wages war against the very act of war, and he begs us to maintain an environment that we can all thrive within. His poetry is a communion with one another and he asks us to embrace the earth with our entire being. His earliest poetry is often prophetic as he predicts the destruction mankind will cause upon itself through over industrialization and the misuse of our natural resources. Wendell Berry is a gift to humanity and with his collection of poems he asks us to return to our original blessing, the earth.

David says

I arrived at the last page of this book of poems last night but am not finished with the book. In fact, I am not finished with any of the Wendell Berry books that I've read. He writes in a simple, logical way that causes me to slow down and think, and wrestle and ponder. His works sticks with me and draws me back for reference. The bookseller (that sold me this book) matter-of-factly stated, "The world would be a better place if everyone would read a Wendell Berry book." I agree.

Here are some of my favorite poems and lines:

- The Peace of Wild Things (google this and read it AND then try to do it!)
- Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front - "Praise ignorance, for what man has not encountered he has not destroyed..."
- The Law That Marries All Things, "It is the great chorus of parts. The only outlawry is division."
- The Reassurer, (against political Bravo Sierra)
- Some Further Words; "the world is whole beyond human knowing."
- On the Theory of the Big Bang as the Origin of the Universe
- "What banged? Before banging how did it get there? When it got there where was it?"
- Questionnaire asks brutal but necessary questions...

My favorite of all and my "mission" poem and maybe the best human description of the mission of the church:

February 2, 1968

In the dark of the moon, in flying snow, in the dead of winter,
war spreading, families dying, the world in danger,
I walk the rocky hillside, sowing clover.

Rachel says

I was preconditioned to love this collection. Wendell Berry is among my favorite writers - of poetry, short story, novel, essay - and this volume gathers together some of the best poems of his career.

If you've heard friends rave about the man's work but haven't yet gotten your feet wet in it, this is a good place to start. Don't read it from cover to cover, but dip in at random spots and splash around a little.

metaphor says

Even love must pass through loneliness,

*

All that has come to us
has come as the river comes,
given in passing away.

*

To love is to suffer—did I
know this when first
I asked you for your love?
I did not. And yet until
I knew, I could not know what
I asked, or gave. I gave
a suffering that I took: yours
and mine, mine when yours;
and yours I have feared most.

[...]

You look at me, you give
a light, which I bear and
return,
and we are held, and all
our time is held, in this
touching look—this touch
that, pressed against the touch
returning in the dark,
is almost sight. We burn
and see by our own light.

Corey says

A book that best lives on your nightstand, to be relished a few pages at a time, read aloud with the wife of your youth.

Or so I found it to be.

Carol says

This new collection encompasses eleven previous books of poetry. Some I found inaccessible. Others I want to memorize. I smiled at the irony of reading "stay away from screens" as I read this book on my Kindle. I smiled at the two line poem entitled "Seventy Years" Well, anyhow, I am not going to die young.

Death is the subject of many poems; death, funerals, remembering, membership.

I don't foresee me reading through this book again, but I will revisit my favorites: "Her First Calf", "At a Country Funeral", "The Gathering", "The Blue Robe", "To My Mother".

Andrea McDowell says

Wendell Berry is an enormously accomplished poet, and when writing of his love for his wife or his family or the landscape surrounding his farm, his poetry is brilliant and profound. But his poem-rants never have the resonance of his other pieces, and all too often when he does write of his wife, or of social issues, I find that his implied views of women would exclude me from the world he's building.

Still, his absolutist stand against change of all kinds and in all contexts is vastly overwhelmed by the many brilliant pieces in the collection. So four stars it is.

Preston Stell says

What can I say? It's been almost four months that I've been reading this book of poetry. It motivates me to actually read Dante's Divine Comedy. It inspired me to writing my own poems. And it was overall a great way to unhurriedly read and put beautiful images into my mind. I've been reading Berry's poetry continually for over a year now and I'm so glad someone told me to. Wendell Berry is one of my favorite writers, and he is probably one of the most important people writing today in my opinion. He humbles me by reminding me of "place" and the importance of "community" in the place I am. It will be a sad day for me when he writes no more. This book is a wonderful work and I couldn't recommend anything more!

Amy says

I checked this out on impulse at the library from a display. Prior to this, I had no familiarity with Wendell Berry as a poet; I had only a vague familiarity with him as a novelist, essayist, and lover of nature. While reading it, I began post-it flagging my favorite poems, only to find that I ended up with dozens of flags jutting out from the pages. Berry encapsulates much of the human experience in eloquent yet simple terms that speak to me. "Window Poems," for example, gives a glimpse of his life as he works by and gazes through a window. He writes:

He is given a fragment of time
in this fragment of the world.
He likes it pretty well.

--My feelings about life that I have never enunciated as well.

Possibly my favorite was his description of conversation with a loved one that matches my feelings of communication with my husband:

And when we speak together,
love, our words rise

like leaves, out of our fallen
words. What we have said
becomes an earth we live on
like two trees,
whose sheddings
enrich each other, making
both the source of each.

I intend to hurry and purchase this book at Amazon before its library due date. Wendell Berry is my new favorite poet.

David Anthony Sam says

Wendell Berry is one of the more under-rated poets of the last 50 years. His new collection of his best over that time demonstrates time and again his deep connection with the land, his profound but complex religious faith, and his lyrical ear. His poems can be read and appreciated by those who regularly read verse and those who seldom do.

That accessibility and his impatience with artifice in poetry or politics may suggest why some in the academic world ignore or disparage his writing.

The later collections are not as strong as those from 1994 and before. His elegies, especially the one for his grandfather, are haunting and universal. I highly recommend living with this collection for a while.

Carol says

My friend gave me this book. At a time when I needed it, this book gave me peace.

It is poetry of the earth. The plowing and the harvest. The weight of the rocks and of the trees. It is sometimes drought and sometimes flood.

It is poetry of people. His family, his neighbors, writers he knows and the shared craft.

It is poetry of time. Months, seasons, generations. History and the future.

I will be reading it over and over again.

Charles van Heck says

Wendell Berry takes the reader into the hillside farmland of Henry County, Kentucky to connect both himself and his readers with what is authentic in life. He removes the false notes of what passes for poetry-- what is often jumbled, arrogant, and pretentious reflections of a poet in a mirror--to remind us that when properly cultivated words, like the soil can yield a bountiful harvest. These poems remind us of the beauty we can be rewarded with when we take the time to live responsibly and with open hearts. This is a book I am unable to say I finished. I will return to it again and again.

James Murphy says

Not long ago I saw an interview of Peter Matthiessen in which he was asked which writers he admires. The first he mentioned was Wendell Berry. His saying that was gratifying to me because Berry is one of 3 poets I've recently become attracted to because of his pastoral sensitivity, whose work creates a recognizable reality through the reflection of it. But it was also the way Matthiessen spoke of him I thought interesting: he called him a man in Kentucky who speaks the truth. And I recognized at once that it's so. Berry's poems strike the bell of being.

Mark Bruce says

Wendell Berry is one of those poets you hear about, whose name sound like a poet's name, whose work promises to be a return to the good dark loam of rural life and verse, but you never seem to get around to reading anything substantial by the man. He is an accomplished poet but this 400 page book does not help his cause. There are too many long poems whose themes get lost in a morass of "serious thoughts," somewhat like having a centric old guy lecture at you about life and death and marriage. On the other hand, his shorter poems are gems. When he relaxes and tells of his farmer's life, he is charming and vibrant. I'm not sure his feeble attempt at humor in the "mad farmer" poems works all that well, but his letters to other poets do swivel on a mordant wit. My favorite line in the book: "Practice resurrection ."

Jeremy says

Wendell Berry's poetry changes how I think about life, about faith, about creation, and about community. I have intentionally read through this book as slowly as possible, only breaking it open when I am in a quiet or beautiful setting. My only disappointment was finishing it.
