



Ten Poems to Last a Lifetime

Roger Housden

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The fourth volume in the popular series that began with *Ten Poems to Change Your Life*, *Ten Poems to Last a Lifetime* focuses on what it means to be truly human. In it, Roger Housden offers us poems on life and death, happiness, seeing ourselves in relation to the world, and, of course, the ineffable--the things that really matter when the chips are down. He describes these passionate poems as "bread for the soul and fire for the spirit."

The poets Housden has chosen are Billy Collins, Hayden Carruth, Dorianne Laux, James Wright, Naomi Shihab Nye, and Mary Oliver from the United States, D. H. Lawrence and John Keats from England, Rainer Maria Rilke from Germany, Fleur Adcock from New Zealand, and Seng-Ts'an from sixth-century China. And yes, that adds up to eleven, not ten. Housden decided to include a bonus poem for his faithful readers in this, the final volume of the series. As before, Housden's luminous essays provide an elegant and easy passage into the sometimes daunting world of poetry, enabling readers to feel that in him they have found a trusted guide and mentor.

Ten Poems to Last a Lifetime Details

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From Reader Review Ten Poems to Last a Lifetime for online ebook

Barb Anders says

i loved this book and this is one that i will never get rid of. First of all, the poems are just beautiful but as a bonus, the author dissects the poem and adds his thoughts on what it means and just beautifully makes you think of all kinds of different things the poem translates to. Great, great little book.

Kathryn says

This little book is so good. There are ten poems written by ten different poets. Each poem is unique and for me, a novice, fairly easy to feel and understand. After the poem Roger Housden tells what the poem brings forth in him and gives background about the poet. There are three other 10 poem books, this being the fourth in the series. Those I must read as well.

Kerfe says

I was interested to read Housden's commentary, to see how he articulated what drew him to choose each poem. He referenced other poets in his discussion, and his ideas seemed insightful without being pretentious. It made me go back and read each one with a different eye.

I really liked seven of the ten, a pretty good percentage. Only one did not seem special to me at all.

This is, Housden says, the final book in his "10 poems" series. And every one has included Mary Oliver.

Vivian says

Roger Housden has chosen ten (actually eleven) poems that have universal themes, and added his commentary on each. Sometimes the commentary solidified my thinking about the poem, other times I disagreed completely. It was a worthwhile read, although I'm not sure any of the poems will stick with me for my lifetime! This probably says more about me than about either the poems or the editorial comments!

Richard says

I have often wanted to understand poetry better. Usually, I understand commentary about poetry less than I do the actual poem. Housden is much more down to earth in his descriptions of the poems in this short book. I liked what he had to say about most of the poems. I needed to understand more what the poet had in mind. Housden points out to the reader that it is his interpretation, and that another person might have a different insight. This book is the last of a series of 4 books published by Housden. I plan on looking for the others. I would recommend this book.

Khinna says

I love the "Ten Poem" series compiled by Roger Housden. I remember picking up one of the books out of wonderment, while stifling through the poetry section, instead of working. Perhaps, it was the saturated, bright color binding. I don't fall privy to compilations of poems. Every reader has their own set of experiences, nostalgias, and coined memories. I flipped through one of the books, and came across Mary Oliver's "The Journey" and like many euphoric, instantaneous, riveting moments with some of my favourite poetry-- the poem utter words I needed. I was introduced to a world of Modern poets. Mary Oliver is still among my favourite modern poets. I jotted the entire series, and told myself that I would buy all of them. Over time, I simply forgot about them, until recently.

Patty says

The Art of Disappearing

*When they say Don't I know you?
say no.*

*When they invite you to the party
remember what parties are like
before answering.
Someone telling you in a loud voice
they once wrote a poem.
Greasy sausage balls on a paper plate.
Then reply.*

*If they say We should get together
say why?*

*It's not that you don't love them anymore.
You're trying to remember something
too important to forget.
Trees. The monastery bell at twilight.
Tell them you have a new project.
It will never be finished.*

*When someone recognizes you in a grocery store
nod briefly and become a cabbage.
When someone you haven't seen in ten years
appears at the door,
don't start singing him all your new songs.
You will never catch up.*

Walk around feeling like a leaf.

*Know you could tumble any second.
Then decide what to do with your time.*

This poem is by Naomi Shihab Nye. It was hard to pick my favorite poem from this collection, but this one spoke to me as I flipped back through this book.

I have been working my way through this volume of poetry for a few months. Although this is the first volume from Housden that I have posted here, I have enjoyed all of his anthologies. It is wonderful to be able to read his commentaries as well as the hand-picked poems.

If you have any interest in poetry, you should at least browse through these collections. Housden has a way of matching up a series of poems from different people and eras that makes all of the selection shine.

Barbara M says

This is a lovely little book of selected poems. What's different about it is that the author, Roger Housden, provides a few pages of commentary after each poem. I thought he selected some very interesting and thought provoking poems and his comments added to my enjoyment of reading the poems. I enjoyed reading the poem first, then reading his comments, and then reading the poem again.

We read this book in my book club and each member read their favorite poem and discussed why they liked it. It was interesting to learn which poems moved each member of the group. It also was a nice way to get everyone in the group talking and contributing to the discussion.

Roger Housden has authored a series of poetry books with commentary. I enjoyed this one and I am planning to read another one!

This book would make a nice little gift to someone who likes poetry.

Erica says

I will summarize this comforting and reflective collection of poetry with an excerpt from the last chapter....

When it's over, I want to say: all my life
I was a bride married to amazement
I was the bridegroom, taking the world into my arms.
(Mary Oliver)

"A bride married to amazement: Is this not a string of words to bring tears to your eyes? Imagine living your life this way, heart and eyes open wide to the world, so much in love with the life you are given to live that you feel joined to it by holy sacrament, the sacrament of love. This marriage, the one with your life, is indeed until death do you part, no second chances."

(Roger Housden) page 18

D says

Several classics -- enjoyable reads, including, of course, Mary Oliver:

When it's over, I want to say: all my life
I was a bride married to amazement
I was the bridegroom, taking the world into my arms.

Hesperides is the legendary garden in the Far West of the world where golden apples grow

Return to the ecstatic rapture, knowing you are part of a greater life, a conscious flicker in the vast network of intelligence that joins both the stars and the ants and you.

Mary Oliver - Wild Geese:
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting --
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things

The Art of Disappearing
by Naomi Shihab Nye

*When they say Don't I know you?
say no.*

*When they invite you to the party
remember what parties are like
before answering.
Someone is telling you in a loud voice
they once wrote a poem.
Greasy sausage balls on a paper plate.
Then reply.*

*If they say We should get together
say why?*

*It's not that you don't love them anymore.
You're trying to remember something
too important to forget.
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*When someone recognizes you in a grocery store
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*When someone you haven't seen in ten years
appears at the door,
don't start singing him all your new songs.
You will never catch up.*

*Walk around feeling like a leaf.
Know you could tumble any second.
Then decide what to do with your time.*

Naomi Shihab Nye, from *Words Under the Words: Selected Poems* (Far Corner Books, 1995)

Diane says

Wonderful selection of poems by poets known and unknown to me. I'll look for Roger Housden's other three books in the "Ten Poems to..." series. He generally sticks to his reflections on the poems he has chosen, rather than emphasizing a line by line analysis. Either approach is useful and I benefited from his.

Ron says

This is a collection of 11 poems by various authors with a short essay behind each of them by the actual book author. I thought some of the poems were very good and some of them were just there. I'll probably look for a collection from at least three of the authors (Dorianne Laux, James Wright, Naomi Shihab Nye) since I really enjoyed their poems.

Charles Boogaard says

When I read poetry I always wish I could discuss the stuff that has gripped me. Also sometimes some of the bones of the work can be missed and with this little book the author gives me a take on it. My appreciation of poetry has only expanded being in this authors virtual class on these poems. I leave you with a Mary Oliver line " tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" A great question for my kids every day emphasizing ONE .

Kelsey says

Great poems, annoying commentary.

Jelly says

It may seem dumb of me but I don't want to read a book of poems and read someone else's synopsis of what they interpreted the poem to be about. Not my cup of tea. If I would like to do so I'd join a book club and

discuss weekly what it is or isn't the author is attempting to portray in their literature.
