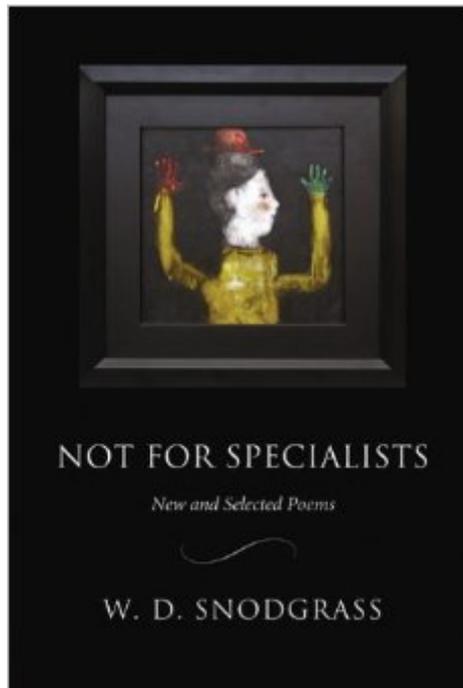


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Not For Specialists: New And Selected Poems (American Poets Continuum)



Synopsis

Until the late 1970s, W. D. Snodgrass was known primarily as a confessional poet and a key player in the emergence of that mode of poetry in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Snodgrass makes poetry out of the daily neuroses and everyday failures of a man—a husband, father, and teacher. This domestic suffering occurs against a backdrop of more universal suffering which Snodgrass believes is inherent in the human experience. Not for Specialists includes 35 new poems complemented by the superb work he wrote in the Pulitzer Prize winning collection, *Heart's Needle*, along with poetry from seven other distinguished collections. Seen from higher up, it makes its first move in the low creekbed, the marshlands down the valley, spreading across the open hayfields, the hedgerows with their tops still lit, laps the roadbed, flows over lawns and gardens, past the house and up the wooded hillside back behind us till only some few rays still scythe between the tree trunks from the far horizon and are gone. W. D. Snodgrass, born in Pennsylvania in 1926, is the author of more than 20 books of poetry, including *The Fuehrer Bunker: The Complete Cycle* (BOA, 1995); *Each in His Season* (BOA, 1993); and *Heart's Needle* (1959), which won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry. His other books include *To Sound Like Yourself: Essays on Poetry* (BOA, 2002), *After-Images: Autobiographical Sketches* (BOA, 1999) and six volumes of translation, including *Selected Translations* (BOA Editions, 1998), which won the Harold Morton Landon Translation Award.

Book Information

Series: American Poets Continuum

Paperback: 251 pages

Publisher: BOA Editions Ltd.; 1st Edition edition (April 1, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1929918771

ISBN-13: 978-1929918775

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.8 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (2 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,544,904 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #225 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Themes & Styles > Nature](#) #5062 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Anthropology > General](#) #7581 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Regional & Cultural > United States](#)

Customer Reviews

For those unfamiliar with the poetry of W.D Snodgrass this significant volume will hold a bright candle to his genius. These poems are not only new works, but also poems selected from his fifty-year career of writing. His poems are at times creations of verbal and visual beauty while at other times they pick away at the other end of the spectrum of terror. He can be both hilarious and reflective, gentle and incisive, but he never leaves the reader without striking a chord of recognition. Yes, this is 'confessional poetry', but it strolls across the battlefields of Iraq, the petty crimes of our neighborhoods, and the dark sides of marriage and divorce with a tingling verve of style. One of the beauties of this particular collection begins on the cover with a reproduction of a painting by American painter DeLoss McGraw. Snodgrass and McGraw have collaborated for some twenty years in a body of works that successfully incorporate Snodgrass' words with McGraw's inimitable 'illustrative characters', paintings in watercolor and gouache that retain the innocence of childlike renderings of people and places and animals that underline the pungent messages of Snodgrass' poetry. This is a beautifully produced book and by far the finest composite collections of his gifts yet published. Highly Recommended. Grady Harp, May 06

Like Ruth Stone's *What Love Comes To* (see review) this is best tackled in reverse order. The new poems (fifty pages' worth) are magnificent in their anger, curmudgeonliness and compassion. For the rest, WD's star ran high when he was the last man standing to write in short, rhymed lines with proper scansion. In a more plural world his constructs now feel more like jingles. And he was way old enough to know that 'Nelly, keep your belly close to mine' should be 'Nelly, put your belly next to mine'; his version turns a surreal playground rhyme into something more like a generic smoocher. I gather from Google this was sung to the tune of *The Streets of Cairo*. The things you learn! My 2009 Waywiser edition, revised, corrected and expanded, has 277 pages to this one's 251. Can I say again how magnificent those last poems are? We even see the wit of old, a WD mellowed but no whit less cantankerous. 'Lasting' ends with a final barb aimed at his parents; for that we have to love this guy! Skip the first 200 pages, though. Pulitzer schmultz. And, pace the other reviewer, the cover artist's nothing to write home about either

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