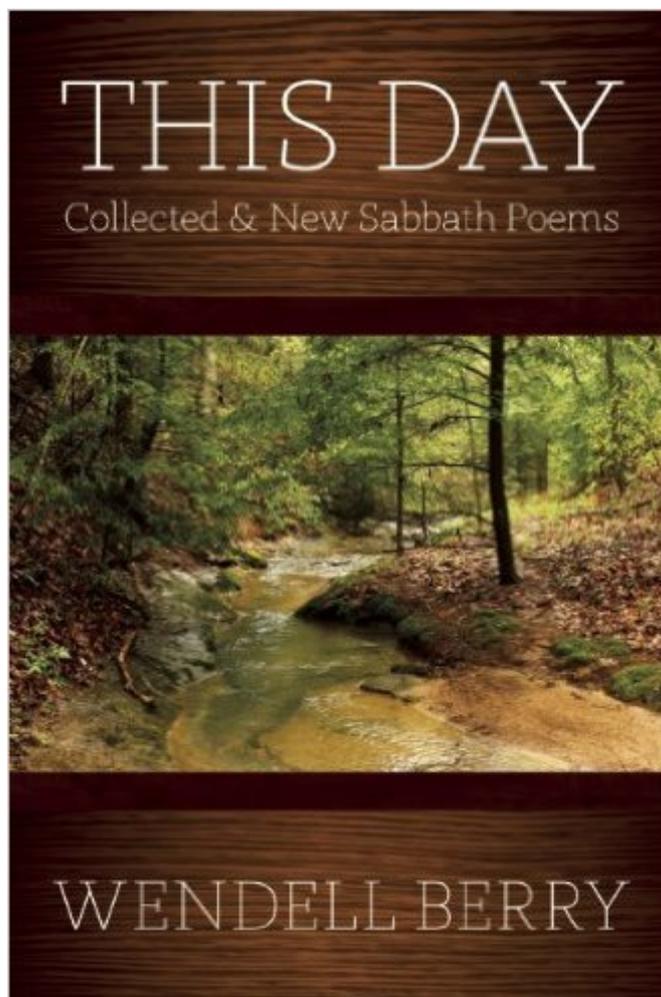


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This Day: Collected & New Sabbath Poems



Synopsis

For nearly thirty-five years, Wendell Berry has been at work on a series of poems occasioned by his solitary Sunday walks around his farm in Kentucky. From riverfront and meadows, to grass fields and woodlots, every inch of this hillside farm lives in these poems, as do the poet's constant companions of memory and occasion, family and animals, who have with Berry created his Home Place with love and gratitude. These are poems of spiritual longing and political extremity, memorials and celebrations, elegies and lyrics, alongside the occasional rants of the Mad Farmer, pushed to the edge yet again by his compatriots and elected officials. With the publication of this new complete edition, it has become increasingly clear that The Sabbath Poems have become the very heart of Berry's entire work. And these magnificent poems, taken as a whole, have become one of the greatest contributions ever made to American poetry.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The idea of a "Sabbath" has always meant or implied rest. From its first recording in Genesis 1, through the conflicts described in the Gospels between Jesus and the Pharisees and teachers of law, right down to our more secular notions of a "sabbatical," rest has always been central in any discussion or understanding of a "Sabbath." And so it is in Wendell Berry's "This Day: Collected & New Sabbath Poems," published in 2013 (and often paired with his "New Collected Poems" published earlier last year). Of course, with Berry, everything is of a piece. As he notes in his introduction, he spends traditional Sabbaths in the old family church, unless the weather is good,

or even tolerable. Then he heads for the woods and fields near his home in Kentucky, and discovering the reality of the Sabbath (and perhaps worship) just as much as he does sitting in a pew. Perhaps more. This is not the first time Berry has published a collection of Sabbath poetry. The heart of the new collection is poems from *Timbered Choir: The Sabbath Poems 1979-1997*. You read a collection like *This Day*, and you quickly learn how critically important the idea is in the poet's understanding of nature, the land, God, aging, humanity, industrial civilization, and agriculture. To read Berry's fiction and essays is to read and gain insights into his poetry, and vice versa. His writing is consistent and whole, reflecting a philosophy and a faith stretching over decades of work. Many of his Sabbath poems are mediations of what he understands as industrial civilization. As surprising as it might be, just below the surface of these poems lies anger directed at how much of community, nature, and relationships is sacrificed to greed.

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