



Ten Windows: How Great Poems Transform the World

Jane Hirshfield

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A dazzling collection of essays on how the best poems work, from the master poet and essayist

“Poetry,” Jane Hirshfield has said, “is language that foments revolutions of being.” In ten eloquent and highly original explorations, she unfolds and explores some of the ways this is done—by the inclusion of hiddenness, paradox, and surprise; by a perennial awareness of the place of uncertainty in our lives; by language’s own acts of discovery; by the powers of image, statement, music, and feeling to enlarge in every direction. The lucid understandings presented here are gripping and transformative in themselves. Investigating the power of poetry to move and change us becomes in these pages an equal investigation into the inhabitation and navigation of our human lives.

Closely reading poems by Dickinson, Bash?, Szymborska, Cavafy, Heaney, Bishop, and Komunyakaa, among many others, Hirshfield reveals how poetry’s world-making takes place: word by charged word. By expanding what is imaginable and sayable, Hirshfield proposes, poems expand what is possible. *Ten Windows* restores us at every turn to a more precise, sensuous, and deepened experience of our shared humanity and of the seemingly limitless means by which that knowledge is both summoned and forged.

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