



Poems That Make Grown Women Cry

By Anthony Holden, Ben Holden

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The internationally bestselling collection of poetry so powerful that it has moved readers to tears. “Anthony and Ben Holden remind us that you don’t have to be an academic or a postgraduate in creative writing to be moved by verse” (*The Wall Street Journal*).

One hundred women—distinguished in literature and film, science and law, theater and human rights—share poems that have stayed with them long after reading. The poems here range from the eighth century to today, from Rumi and Shakespeare to Sylvia Plath, W.H. Auden to Carol Ann Duffy, Pablo Neruda, and Derek Walcott to Imtiaz Dharker and Warsan Shire. Their themes range from love and loss, through mortality and mystery, war and peace, to the beauty and variety of nature. From Yoko Ono to Judi Dench, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie to Elena Ferrante, Tina Brown, Michelle Williams, and Sarah Waters to Kauai Hart Hemmings and Joan Baez to Nikki Giovanni, this unique collection delivers private insights into the minds of women whose writing, acting, and thinking are admired around the world. Their selections include classics by visionaries, such as Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman, and Pablo Neruda as well as contemporary works by masters, including Seamus Heaney, Adrienne Rich, and Warsan Shire, with introductions to their work as powerful as the poems themselves.

Poems That Make Grown Women Cry is a collection which represents a variety of aesthetic sensibilities and the full spectrum of human emotion. It is also a reminder of how poetry can touch minds and hearts, and how easily it will do so for readers of all stripes if they turn the first page.

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Editorial Review

Review

“The Holdens remind us that you don't have to be an academic or a postgraduate in creative writing to be moved by verse...I defy anyone not to enjoy the Holdens' book: It's plain fun.” (Wall Street Journal)

“*Poems That Make Grown Men Cry* is an anthology of some of the most emotive lines in literature chosen by 100 famous and admired men, ranging from Daniel Radcliffe to Nick Cave, John le Carré and Jonathan Franzen.” (The Guardian)

“This collection is about the emotional power of art, and the Holdens cast aside any accusations of sentimentality or mawkishness. Anyone who reads *Poems That Make Grown Men Cry* will be roused, disturbed and exalted by the poems selected.” (Shelf-Awareness.com)

About the Author

Anthony Holden is an award-winning journalist who has published more than 30 books, including biographies of Laurence Olivier, Tchaikovsky and Shakespeare. He has published translations of opera, ancient Greek plays and poetry. His son Ben is a writer and film producer. He was director of European Film and Television at Exclusive Media, where he helped relaunch Britain's most famous film production label, Hammer. Anthony and Ben both live in London. Ben Holden is a writer and film producer. He lives in London and studied English at Merton College, Oxford. With his father Anthony, Ben edited the bestselling *Poems That Make Grown Men Cry* and *Poems That Make Grown Women Cry*.

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Poems That Make Grown Women Cry

Donal Og

ANONYMOUS



NATASCHA McELHONE

‘Donal Og’ is recited in John Huston’s last film *The Dead*. After watching that movie as a teenager I then found the same poem in an anthology, *The Rattle Bag*, edited by Ted Hughes and Seamus Heaney. This was all pre-Google searches, of course, so it seemed like a spectacular coincidence to hear and read this poem twice in the same year, without knowing who wrote it or where it came from.

It has since become quite popular; I saw it in the literary supplement of a newspaper and then heard it read beautifully on Roger McGough’s Radio 4 programme *Poetry Please*.

I still find it just as affecting now as I did at sixteen. More so, in fact.

Donal Og

It is late last night the dog was speaking of you;
the snipe was speaking of you in her deep marsh.

It is you are the lonely bird through the woods;
and that you may be without a mate until you find me.

You promised me, and you said a lie to me,
that you would be before me where the sheep are flocked;

I gave a whistle and three hundred cries to you,
and I found nothing there but a bleating lamb.

You promised me a thing that was hard for you,
a ship of gold under a silver mast;

twelve towns with a market in all of them,
and a fine white court by the side of the sea.

You promised me a thing that is not possible,
that you would give me gloves of the skin of a fish;
that you would give me shoes of the skin of a bird;
and a suit of the dearest silk in Ireland.

When I go by myself to the Well of Loneliness,
I sit down and I go through my trouble;
when I see the world and do not see my boy,
he that has an amber shade in his hair.

It was on that Sunday I gave my love to you;
the Sunday that is last before Easter Sunday
and myself on my knees reading the Passion;
and my two eyes giving love to you for ever.

My mother has said to me not to be talking with you today,
or tomorrow, or on the Sunday;
it was a bad time she took for telling me that;
it was shutting the door after the house was robbed.
My heart is as black as the blackness of the sloe,
or as the black coal that is on the smith's forge;
or as the sole of a shoe left in white halls;
it was you put that darkness over my life.
You have taken the east from me, you have taken the west from me;
you have taken what is before me and what is behind me;
you have taken the moon, you have taken the sun from me;
and my fear is great that you have taken God from me!

(8th century)

TRANSLATION BY LADY AUGUSTA GREGORY



The actress Natascha McElhone is known for her roles in such films as *The Devil's Own* (1997), *Ronin* (1998), *The Truman Show* (1998) and *Solaris* (2002), as well as the US television series *Californication* (2007–14). She is also the author of *After You* (2010).

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Tim Simmons:

Have you spare time for the day? What do you do when you have much more or little spare time? Yep, you can choose the suitable activity regarding spend your time. Any person spent their own spare time to take a wander, shopping, or went to the actual Mall. How about open as well as read a book titled *Poems That Make Grown Women Cry*? Maybe it is for being best activity for you. You understand beside you can spend your time together with your favorite's book, you can smarter than before. Do you agree with it is opinion or you have additional opinion?

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