



101 Sonnets (Faber Poetry)

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Poets have been fascinated and challenged by the sonnet ever since it was imported from Italy to England in the 16th century. With its 14 lines, inexhaustibly variable, it has met particular needs of almost every major poet from Thomas Wyatt to Paul Muldoon. Don Paterson - himself an adept of the form - has devised an anthology that is both a sharing of personal favourites and a celebration of high moments in the sonnet's history.

101 Sonnets (Faber Poetry) Details

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Jennifer says

I came somewhat hesitantly to 101 Sonnets edited by Don Paterson, on the back of enjoying Short and Sweet edited by Simon Armitage in the same series. Firstly I shared (indeed probably more totally embraced) Armitage's comments on the 14 line sonnet form in his introduction to the latter book. Secondly, when I was on my little 'read all the TS Eliot prizewinners available through the library' project, Don Paterson's own work was distinctly inaccessible.

His introduction to this volume however was very accessibly written and I felt I learned a lot (or will do if I re-read it a few times so it sticks) whereas before I had only the idea of 14 lines and a single rhyme scheme. I also very much enjoyed his notes at the end on each poem, which again I feel will repay a second reading. They were both light hearted and helped me to a deeper understanding of the form in all its varieties. I would not have enjoyed the poems as much without his input.

The selection was very interesting. I was not surprised, given my reading of 'Landing Light' to see that he had chosen a number in Scots and Old English. I was startled by some stunningly vulgar offerings but they are ancient works which have clearly stood the test of time and one is very funny, the other mouth-puckeringly (and I'm sorry that's an unfortunate choice of words given the topic) sour (by Catullus) They belong here. Some familiar works (Simon Armitage...) but mostly new to me, and some overlap with Sounds Good, the collection in the series for reading aloud - enough to be appropriate and no more.

Graham Tennyson says

I will carry this little treasure around with me. Not only does it contain some of the most profound statements of what it is to be human, but one also gets a great Introduction by Don Paterson. Want a philosophy book, an entertainment, a quick history of the sonnet? Want a resource for the darkest night or a pick-me up with humour to share? This is it ...

Rob says

I think Paterson's intention in assembling this anthology was two fold: first, he wanted to provide a collection of good sonnets that would be fun to read and accessible to a wide variety of readers; and second, he wanted to show the many variations of one of the most fundamental poetic forms. His introduction provides a concise but informative history of the sonnet and addresses some of the academic discussion/debate over what constitutes a "sonnet." Paterson arrived at a rather liberal definition, deciding that any poem with fourteen lines could be considered for his sonnet anthology. He writes, "Two or three of the poems here are probably not sonnets in anyone's book, but they are in this one: apart from being fine poems, they'll serve to show just how fuzzy the definition is." So, if the definition was fuzzy to begin with, Paterson seeks to blur it even further with his anthology. The poems in this book include many of the great poems and authors you read in school, but there are a few obscure poems as well. Paterson includes some brief notes on each poem at the back of the book which primarily discuss the technical aspects of the poems, leaving the interpretation up to each individual reader. Overall, it was a good collection.

Jenna Houston says

I like poetry, and I like sonnets, but upon having to study this for university, I have a strong dislike for having to unpick and analyse them! But the sonnets in this collection are great!

Marina Sofia says

I had no idea there were so many modern sonnets and so much variety within the sonnet form. Introduced with tongue firmly in cheek and with a brief, often amusing comment about each sonnet by poet Don Paterson, this is a very handy introduction to one of poetry's best-loved and most versatile forms. A joy to own and dip into!

Emily says

A hugely varied collection of sonnets, covering so many poets, eras, styles etc. A wonderful collection.

Judy says

This is a wonderful varied collection of sonnets - wish I'd bought it instead of borrowing from the library!

Laura says

Interesting but taxing to read.

123bex says

I read this anthology in a huge mood that only one Shakespeare had been included, only to get to the afterword and find a passage saying only one was allowed, but Shakespeare is obviously the greatest sonneteer of all time. You can stay then, Don Paterson, I GUESS.

Really nice collection, interesting foreword and useful notes.

Leah says

I have always enjoyed reading poetry, but this is simply a beautiful collection! There are an odd one or two

that detract it from the overall presentation of poetry, but I cannot say that it is worth anything less than the full marks.

I disliked the two somewhat controversial poems, both highly sexually based. I understand that these sonnets were probably written to cause such reactions, I just felt they were fairly misplaced.

The rest were really beautifully written. Especially Christina Rossetti's poem, however morbid, was a pleasure to read. Also the poem named 'Muse' was so sweet I ended up writing it out for myself! I'm so glad I got to read this collection.

Sophia Roberts says

A perfect little primer with a stunning introduction, together with an enlightening pithy commentary on every one of the featured sonnets. For the most part, the selection is excellent. So, worth 4.5 stars, really...

Katherine Simmons says

Stands above the others in the series.
