



Death Poems: Classic, Contemporary, Witty, Serious, TearJerking, Wise, Profound, Angry, Funny, Spiritual, Atheistic, Uncertain, Personal, Political, Mythic, Earthy, and Only Occasionally Morbid

Russ Kick (Editor)

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Russ Kick is known for his quirky, ingenious, and surprisingly useful collections. He's done it again. This is the most comprehensive, not to mention the first, anthology of death poetry ever published in the English language, from popular Disinformation author Russ Kick is ultimately life affirming. "Death Poems" is an unprecedented, vast survey of death in poetry that cuts across time, world cultures and languages.

"Death Poems" covers a range of subjects, from the death of children, lost loves, and funeral rites, to serial killers, 9/11, the death penalty, roadkill, war, the Underworld, reincarnation, and elegies to famous people.

Included are the famous poems--death poetry's greatest hits--that have to be included: "Because I Could Not Stop for Death" by Dickinson, "To an Athlete Dying Young" by Housman, "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night" by Thomas, "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" by Wilde, "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" by Whitman, "Adonais" by Shelley, and a bunch more. Also included are poems from Ralph Waldo Emerson, Jane Austen, Emily Bronte, Sappho, Nietzsche, C.S. Lewis, Victor Hugo, Rumi, Benjamin Franklin, Langston Hughes and many, many more.

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From Reader Review Death Poems: Classic, Contemporary, Witty, Serious, TearJerking, Wise, Profound, Angry, Funny, Spiritual, Atheistic, Uncertain, Personal, Political, Mythic, Earthy, and Only Occasionally Morbid for online ebook

Elaine says

I loved this collection, I just wish dates had been included with the poems. I understand the whole point is that the poems are timeless, but I do like a little perspective on the history behind the work.

Kerry says

Even now I go back and read poems just picking a page at random during the day. A poem for everything and everyday. This book has a wide range of poems and ballads from tragic, morbid and some even personal, plus a whole lot more. If you can think of it it is probably in this book. I figure I have a poem for everyday this year or more to read again. This book is a great read and I recommend you pick it up just to see life from other angles. Some will inspire you, others will make you cry or even break your heart.

Dave Donahoe says

Read as a first reads selection.

There is not much to say about this book that is not expressed in the subtitle as it pretty much covers all aspects of death poetry. It is interesting, however, to see all of these poems in one compilation.

The one complaint I have is that the poems are mostly older, classical poems by poets such as Shakespeare, Byron, Dickinson, et al and many contemporary poets are ignored. This may be simply be a case of copyright, but there are many poets that are ignored. Steve Mason and Bruce Weigl, for instance, have written many exceptional poems about their experiences in Viet Nam and they were not included. The contemporary poets included did contribute some of the more thought provoking selections, possibly because they were being read for the first time. One of the best poems in the collection is South Central Los Angeles Death Trip, 1982 by Wanda Coleman. It was a brilliant examination of life and death in LA, and society's reaction to it. Breathtaking.

The argument could be made that everyone cannot be included. If this is the case, then I would suggest a single poem per author and the inclusion of more poets, or a shorter tome.

Jessie B. says

An exceptional and comprehensive collection.

Elizabeth says

As heard on The Writer's Almanac.

Clare Castleberry says

This is so inspirational. If you're a horror writer, I highly recommend taking a look at some of these. I think my favorite is the one by Pablo Neruda.

Mills College Library says

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HBalikov says

The title claims the entire field: "Classic, Contemporary, Witty, Serious, Tear-Jerking, Wise, Profound, Angry, Funny, Spiritual, Atheistic, Uncertain, Personal, Political, Mythic, Earthy, and Only Occasionally Morbid".

I found, in grief, that I could not read more than one or two at a time.

Natalie says

I started reading this collection after my sister died. It is an interesting idea for a poem collection. The poems span all different types of poetry from all sorts of different time periods. The mix is very eclectic and can sometimes be a bit hit or miss. But there were some that really hit home. It's also just fascinating to see how differently death can be perceived.

Kimberly says

Russ Kirk is a phenomenal editor. I had not heard of him before and am now inspired to find out about everything else he has touched. I find myself time after time questioning the arrangement of poems in many collections. Death Poems was very well thought out - not just the categorizations, but the juxtaposition of the poems. The only disagreement I had with the collection was the repetition in appearance of a few poets (though to be fair, Emily Dickinson had a bit of an obsession with). Overall, however, it is a brilliant collection.

Melissa says

3.5 stars.

This was a decent anthology of poetry about death and dying. There were the usual popular poets repeated countless times and a some lesser known poets. I found many poems and poets I love and having them in one books is wonderful. There are some poems that were not in here that I think should have been added but the author cannot add them all. The main reason this does not deserve four stars is that some are just parts of poems, a few songs, bible verses, and parts of Shakespeare's plays which are not even poems.

Sandy says

okay

Bethany Ebert says

I liked it. Grief is a lifelong process, and it's good to have literary company.
