



Gin Before Breakfast: The Dilemma of the Poet in the Newsroom

W. Dale Nelson

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This enlightening volume presents minibiographies of key British and American poets who at one time or another worked as journalists. Poets covered range from the famous to the obscure: Whittier to Whitman, Kipling to Bryant, Coleridge to Crane. Writing in a direct, unadorned style, W. Dale Nelson tells each writer's story, often relating how the poet in question felt about the journalistic experience and its impact upon creative work. Archibald MacLeish wrote "young poets are advised by their elders to avoid the practice of journalism as they would wet socks and gin before breakfast." On the other hand, Leonard Woolf suggests that Hemingway's strong spare prose often "bears the mark of good journalism." The author raises compelling issues about developments in poetic form, effects of printing and communication on poetry, and the relationship of poetry and locales. He also looks at how poetic diction has been influenced by the language of reportage and the basic difference in the purpose of journalism versus that of poetry.



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