



# The Art of Poetry: How to Read a Poem

*Shira Wolosky*

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## **The Art of Poetry: How to Read a Poem** Shira Wolosky

In *The Art of Poetry*, Shira Wolosky provides a dazzling introduction to an art whose emphasis on verbal music, wordplay, and dodging the merely literal makes it at once the most beguiling and most challenging of literary forms. A uniquely comprehensive, step-by-step introduction to poetic form, *The Art of Poetry* moves progressively from smaller units such as the word, line, and image, to larger features such as verse forms and voice. In fourteen engaging, beautifully written chapters, Wolosky explores in depth how poetry does what it does while offering brilliant readings of some of the finest lyric poetry in the English and American traditions. Both readers new to poetry and poetry veterans will be moved and enlightened as Wolosky interprets work by William Shakespeare, John Donne, William Blake, William Wordsworth, Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, Sylvia Plath, and others. The book includes a superb two-chapter discussion of the sonnets form and history, and represents the first poetry guide to introduce gender as a basic element of analysis. In contrast to many existing guides, which focus on selected formal aspects like metrics or present definitions and examples in a handbook format, *The Art of Poetry* covers the full landscape of poetry's subtle art while showing readers how to comprehend a poetic text in all its dimensions. Other special features include Wolosky's consideration of historical background for the developments she discusses, and the way her book is designed to acquaint or reacquaint readers with the core of the lyric tradition in English. Lively, accessible, and original, *The Art of Poetry* will be a rich source of inspiration for students, general readers, and those who teach poetry.

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