



A Draft of Light: Poems

John Hollander

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A glorious new collection from one of our most distinguished poets.

Here are poems that explore the ways in which ordinary objects open doors to the more hidden, subconscious truths of our inner selves: a bird of “countless colors” calls to mind “the echo . . . / of an inner event / From my forgotten past”; a subway bee sting conjures up quick unlikely visits by the muses—a momentary awareness that is “as much of a / Gift from those nine sisters as / Is ever given.”

Other poems lay bare the imperfect nature of our memories: reality altered by our inevitably less accurate but perhaps “truer” recall of past events (“memory— / As full of random holes as any / Uncleaned window is of spots / Of blur and dimming—begins at once / To interfere”). Still others examine the dramatic changes in perspective we undergo over the course of a lifetime as, in the poem “When We Went Up,” John Hollander describes the varied responses he has to climbing the same mountain at different points in his life.

In all of the poems Hollander illuminates the fluid nature of physical and emotional experience, the connections between the simple things we encounter every day and the ways in which the meaning we attribute to them shapes our lives. Like the harmonious coming together of bandstand instruments on a summer afternoon, he writes, most of what we come to know in the world is “A dying moment / Of lastingness thenceforth / Ever not to be.”

Throughout this thought-provoking collection, Hollander reveals the ways in which we are constantly creating unique worlds of our own, “a draft of light” of our own making, and how these worlds, in turn, continually shape our most basic identities and truest selves.

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