



**[(On Poetry and Craft: Selected Prose)] [Author:
Theodore Roethke] published on (April, 2001)**

Theodore Roethke

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""One of the virtues of good poetry is the fact that it irritates the mediocre.""Theodore Roethke was one of the most famous and outspoken poets and poetry teachers this country has ever known. In this volume of selected prose, Roethke articulates his commitments to imaginative possibilities, offers tender advice to young writers, and zings darts at stuffed shirts, lightweights and fools.""Art is our defense against hysteria and death.""With the assistance of Roethke's widow, this volume has been edited to include the finest selections from out of print collections of prose and journal entries. Focused on the making and teaching of poetry, "On Poetry and Craft" will be prized in the classroom-and outrageous Roethke quotes will once again pepper our conversations.""You must believe a poem is a holy thing, a good poem, that is.""Theodore Roethke was of an illustrious generation of poets which included Sexton, Plath, Lowell, Berryman, and like them he received nearly every major award in poetry, including the Pulitzer Prize and twice the National Book Award. In spite of his fame, he remained a legendary teacher, known for the care and attention he gave to his students, poets such as James Wright, Carolyn Kizer, Tess Gallagher, and Richard Hugo. Roethke died on August 1, 1963, while swimming in a friend's pool.""But before I'm reduced to an absolute pulp by my own ambivalence, I must say goodbye. The old lion perisheth. Nymphs, I wish you the swoops of many fish. May your search for the abiding be forever furious.""On Poetry and CraftI am overwhelmed by the beautiful disorder of poetry, the eternal virginity of words.The poem, even a short time after being written, seems no miracle; unwritten, it seems something beyond the capacity of the gods.We can't escape what we are, and I'm afraid many of my notions about verse (I haven't too many) have been conditioned by the fact that for nearly 25 years I've been trying to teach the young something about the nature of verse by

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