



God and the Imagination: On Poets, Poetry, and the Ineffable

Paul Mariani

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Poet, critic, biographer, and Catholic intellectual Paul Mariani delivers huge armfuls of experience and knowledge in this wide-ranging collection of twenty-four essays. As a man of faith in a secular world, Mariani brings to light issues surrounding spirituality and poetry through discussions of the Gnostics, Roman history, the Bible, John of the Cross, Rilke, Robert Pack, Galway Kinnell, Philip Levine, and the poets he most admires—Gerard Manley Hopkins, William Carlos Williams, Hart Crane, John Berryman, and Robert Lowell.

Charged with spiritual and intellectual awe, Mariani fully engages with his subjects, from their lives to their works to their grand impact on Mariani's own life as a poet. His prose flows easily from anecdote to analysis, from Paterson, the setting of Williams's great tribute poem, to Manhattan, where Mariani haunts old neighborhoods and the Brooklyn Bridge, searching for traces of Hart Crane. By infusing scholarly criticism with a personal voice, Mariani allows us to see the relationship between poetry and a sublime presence in the universe.

Serious reading for anyone interested in modern and contemporary poetry, *God and the Imagination* offers elegant and original insights into a wide variety of poetic concerns. But it is most extraordinary for its celebration of the lives of the poets, which allow us, in Mariani's words, "to recover what would otherwise be lost to time and silence."

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