



Responsive Reading (Poets on Poetry)

Edward Mark Hirsch

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This collection brims with wide-ranging encounters and explorations, fundamental discoveries, and reconsiderations. It is a book of deep, attentive, and appreciative readings. In *Responsive Reading*, reading itself is treated as a creative act, an intimate, triggering, and momentous activity.

The collection begins with a reconsideration of the "J" author, the most ancient and humanly oriented writer in the Hebrew Bible, and concludes with a memoir of the author's grandfather, whose poems (which have not survived) he has tried to envision. There is an investigation of Dante's *Inferno* and of a biography of Emerson. There are pieces on the Polish poets Zbigniew Herbert, Aleksander Wat, and Wislawa Szymborska, and on the Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai; on Derek Walcott; and on the sullen majesty of Philip Larkin. There are also pieces that follow Federico Garcia Lorca and Joseph Cornell (via Charles Simic) on forays into New York City. An award-winning essay, "The Imaginary Irish Peasant," tracks a company of Irish writers into the countryside, both a real and an imagined place, a symbol-laden territory. Indeed, all these pieces testify to a poet's sublime experience of reading.

Edward Hirsch is author of *On Love*, *Earthly Measures*, *The Night Parade*, *Wild Gratitude*, and *For the Sleepwalkers*. His prizes include an award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Lyndhurst Prize, the William Riley Parker Prize from the Modern Language Association, the National Book Critics Award, and the Rome Prize. He is poetry editor for *Doubletake* magazine and teaches in the creative writing program at the University of Houston.

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