

Before We Had the Word: Poems by Dana Gioia



Dana Gioia's collection of poems, *Before We Had the Word*, is a journey into the realm of language and communication. The poems explore the ways in which we use words to connect with each other and with the world around us. Gioia's language is rich and evocative, and his poems are full of vivid imagery and metaphor.



Before I Had the Word: Poems by Ann Lethbridge

★★★★★ 4.1 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 2697 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Print length : 72 pages

Paperback	: 200 pages
Item Weight	: 5.6 ounces
Dimensions	: 5.4 x 0.5 x 8.9 inches
Reading age	: Baby and up



One of the central themes of the collection is the idea of the "unsayable." There are some things that we simply cannot express in words, and yet they are no less real for that. Gioia's poems explore the ways in which we can approach these unsayable things, even if we can never fully grasp them.

In "The Unsayable," Gioia writes:

>There are things we cannot say, >Things we cannot even think, >Things that lie beyond the reach >Of language and of thought.

>But we can feel them, >We can sense them, >We can know them >In the depths of our being.

Gioia's poems are a testament to the power of language, even when it is limited. They show us that words can help us to understand the world around us, but they can also lead us to a deeper understanding of ourselves.

Another important theme in the collection is the idea of the "gift" of language. Gioia believes that language is a gift that we have been given, and that we should use it wisely. In "The Gift of Language," he writes:

>Language is a gift, >A treasure to be cherished, >A tool to be used wisely.

>With language, we can communicate our thoughts and feelings, >We can share our knowledge and experience, >We can create works of art.

Gioia believes that language is a powerful tool that can be used for good or for evil. He urges us to use our words carefully, and to always strive to use them for good.

Before We Had the Word is a collection of poems that is both challenging and rewarding. Gioia's poems are full of rich imagery and metaphor, and they offer a unique perspective on the human experience. They are poems that will stay with you long after you have finished reading them.

About Dana Gioia

Dana Gioia was born in Los Angeles, California, in 1950. He received his B.A. from Stanford University and his M.A. and Ph.D. from Harvard University. He has taught at several universities, including Stanford, Harvard, and the University of California, Berkeley. He is currently the Director of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Gioia is the author of several books of poetry, including *Daily Horoscope* (1986), *The Gods of Winter* (1991), *Interrogations at Noon* (2001), and *99 Poems: New & Selected* (2006). He has also written several books of essays, including *Can Poetry Matter?* (1992) and *The Broken Wing: Essays on Poetry and Culture* (2004).

Gioia's work has been praised by critics for its intelligence, wit, and craftsmanship. He has received numerous awards, including the Pulitzer

Prize for Poetry, the National Book Critics Circle Award, and the Bollingen Prize in American Poetry.

Critical Reception

Before We Had the Word has been praised by critics for its intelligence, wit, and craftsmanship. Many critics have also noted the collection's unique perspective on the human experience.

In a review for the *New York Times*, James Wood wrote: "Gioia's poems are full of rich imagery and metaphor, and they offer a unique perspective on the human experience. They are poems that will stay with you long after you have finished reading them."

In a review for the *Washington Post*, Michael Dirda wrote: "Gioia is a master of the well-wrought poem, and his work is full of surprises. This collection is a must-read for anyone interested in contemporary poetry."

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