



The Essential Daryl Hine

Daryl Hine

James Pollock, Compiler

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This collection demonstrates the best of Daryl Hine's taut and finely wrought rhyming poetry.

Rhyme, as used in poetry, is a tricky thing, often seen as a hallmark of unserious or juvenile thinking. With this reputation to overcome, along with the intrinsic constraints of rhyme, it's no wonder many poets prefer free verse. Canadian Daryl Hine used rhyme as a tool to hone his impressive verse, and the poems James Pollock has selected for *The Essential Daryl Hine* are perfect examples.

In his long and distinguished career, Hine published many poetry books; won various awards, grants, and accolades; and even served as editor of *Poetry* magazine for ten years. Pollock provides a thorough cross section of Hine's oeuvre, with poems spanning nearly fifty years of publication. While Hine's technique is impressive, equally so is the content of his poems, in which he muses upon death, human relationships, and more, in a penetrating style.

Hine's poetry is always muscular and dynamic, but kept within the borders of his self-imposed rhyming discipline, it has an additional energy, as if coiled inside a box and ready to spring. In "A B.C. Diary," Hine offers a study of his relationship with British Columbia, showing both sophistication and a sense of humor: "Later, confronted with the paradox of free / Verse, I trade my meaning for a rhyme. / *Thursday*. Unpunctual? No, impervious to time."

The enjoyment in reading these poems, however, stems not just from Hine's formidable vocabulary or his literary dexterity, but from the creative ways he utilizes those tools. Rhyming patterns sometimes reveal themselves only after being read aloud, and Hine has plenty of tricks and odd patterns to keep the rhymes from becoming predictable. "The Man Who Edited *Mille*" is a tour de force, as is the ten-page "Arrondissements," a profile of the twenty administrative districts of Paris.

Hine died in 2012, making *The Essential Daryl Hine* a fitting final tribute to the man. "Epistolary," a moving study of the lost art of letter writing, is the final poem in this collection—it's a nice touch by Pollock to place it there. Its final lines summarize Hine's legacy nicely: "and so, so long: / The writer crumbles but the text survives."

The Essential Daryl Hine is just that—essential—as a reminder that rhyme is a tool best not forgotten by modern poets.

PETER DABBENE (October 12, 2015)

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