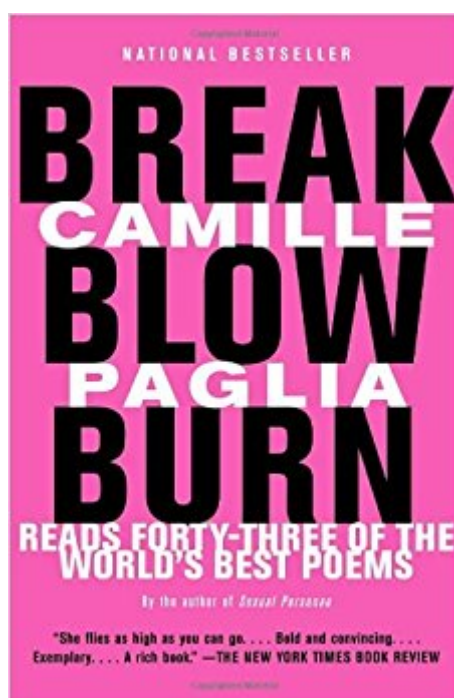


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Break, Blow, Burn: Camille Paglia Reads Forty-three Of The World's Best Poems



Synopsis

America's most provocative intellectual brings her blazing powers of analysis and appreciation to bear on the great poems of the Western tradition, and on some unexpected discoveries of her own. Combining close reading with a panoramic breadth of learning, Camille Paglia refreshes our understanding of poems we thought we knew, from Shakespeare's "Sonnet 73" to Shelley's "Ozymandias," from Donne's "The Flea" to Lowell's "Man and Wife," and from Dickinson's "Because I Could Not Stop for Death" to Plath's "Daddy." Paglia also introduces us to less-familiar works by Paul Blackburn, Wanda Coleman, Chuck Wachtel, Rochelle Kraut "and even Joni Mitchell. Daring, riveting, and beautifully written, *Break, Blow, Burn* will excite even seasoned poetry lovers, and create a generation of new ones. Includes a new epilogue that details the selection process for choosing the 43 poems presented in this book and provides commentary on some of the pieces that didn't make the final cut.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Paglia offers a book to a generation absorbed with images, detached from the interior of culture. Paglia writes, "The only antidote to the magic of images is the magic of words." Here she demonstrates the power of words for suggesting images better than those seen with eyes. Paglia is captivated by poetry. The reader's interest develops when she carefully (maybe a little dryly) commentates on one poem at a time - avoiding general brushstrokes as she identifies the subtleties

from various lines. As it's been said, "from this book you could doubt several aspects of her taste in poetry. But you couldn't doubt her love of it." You can hear Paglia's disappointment when she writes, "Along the way I've encountered so many people in the publishing world, in magazines, who said to me, you know, 'I always keep up with the new novels, but not poetry.' These are really literary people, and even they feel poetry no longer speaks to them." Paglia suggests an explanation for the decline in the love of poetry, "Thanks to 25 years of post-structuralism in our elite colleges, we have this idea now that you are supposed to use your pseudo-sociological critical eye to look down on the work and find everything that's wrong with it," ...this style of teaching just nips students' enthusiasm in the bud." However, her statement is tempered by what I appreciate most - her discrimination regarding true talent and her lack of tolerance for those poetry artists who insist on using it as an instrument of civil rights - while at the same time lacking excellence in their work.

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