

*“Resources for the Beginning Poet”*

Lia Greenwell

This collection of poetry books, poetry anthologies, and interviews with poets has been assembled out of necessity and love as a beginning student of poetry in the last 3 years. I decided I needed to start buying poetry books during my freshman year at MSU, when I would renew a book over and over again, even if I had finished it. I didn't want to give it back, in case I might suddenly need to feel again how I felt in the last breath after finishing a certain poem. A book of poetry, and the single poem, is a carefully shaped diamond that is meant to give us a clear glimpse into what it means to be alive and present in the world. These are my books of wisdom and philosophy, my I Ching and Bible, that have contributed to my idea of what poetry is and helped me in honing my craft.

This collection includes essential poetry anthologies, but more importantly there are many the single books of poetry that have been most essential to my voice as a writer. As a student under poetry Diane Wakoski at MSU, I have learned to read poetry foremost in the single book form, as the poet published it, not by the individual unit of the poem, or as comprised by an anthologist or editor. This allows me to glimpse a few years or decades of the life of a poet in the small world of the book they have created. My collecting interest lies in the single book most importantly, but also in discovering poets through interesting or exemplary anthologies, such as the Poetry Anthology, a compilation of poems from Poetry Magazine, the most mainstream and prestigious poetry publication.

This collection includes the quintessential American poets—Walt Whitman, Robert Frost, Emily Dickinson—but isn't limited to the poets one finds in every anthology. There are small books by lesser-known poets that I've had the privilege of meeting in the classroom setting. The books by these poets serve as a memento of the discussions we shared and mark the first few books I've had signed by the author.

A very important part of this collection that is not a book of poetry is the Paris Review Interviews, volumes 1-4. They contain interviews with some of the most respected writers in the world, sometimes the only formal interview a writer has given. The set includes conversations with poets Jack Gilbert, T.S. Eliot, Frank O'Connor, Elizabeth Bishop, and Robert Lowell.

Almost all of the books in this collection have been obtained used through library book sales (the most appropriate source for a student book collector's meager means), although the truly beautiful and fantastic volumes were given to me as gifts by those aware of my love for books.