



Poems To Live By in Uncertain Times

Joan Murray

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The week after the attack on the World Trade Center, Joan Murray read her poem about it, "Survivors-- Found," on National Public Radio.

Thousands heard her poem and were so moved that they contacted her to ask for copies. In the wake of our nation's tragedy, poetry has taken on a new relevance in people's lives. As Dinitia Smith noted in *The New York Times*, "In the weeks since the terrorist attacks, people have been consoling themselves-and one another-with poetry in an almost unprecedented way."

Poems to Live By features sixty of the finest poems by an international group of distinguished writers, including W. H. Auden, Czeslaw Milosz, Bertolt Brecht, Yehuda Amichai, Mary Oliver, Miguel de Unamuno, Gwendolyn Brooks, Billy Collins, Yusef Komunyakaa, and Sharon Olds. Agreeing with Kenneth Burke that literature is equipment for living, Murray has arranged the anthology in six sections that address our most urgent concerns: death and remembrance, fear and suffering, affirmations and rejoicings, warnings and instructions, war and rumors of war, meditations and conversations.

Beginning with Faiz Ahmed Faiz's somber remembrance ('This is the way that autumn came to the trees: / it stripped them down to the skin') and concluding with D. H. Lawrence's simple and deep-felt "Pax," *Poems to Live By* addresses our need for wisdom in dark times, whether those times are personal or the ones we live through together.

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