



The Mind-Body Problem: Poems

Katha Pollitt

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In **The Mind-Body Problem**, Katha Pollitt takes the ordinary events of life—her own and others’—and turns them into brilliant, poignant, and often funny poems that are full of surprises and originality. Pollitt’s imagination is stirred by conflict and juxtaposition, by the contrast (but also the connection) between logic and feeling, between the real and the transcendent, between our outer and inner selves: Jane Austen slides her manuscript under her blotter, bewildered young mothers chat politely on the playground, the simple lines of a Chinese bowl in a thrift store remind the poet of the only apparent simplicities of her childhood. The title poem hilariously and ruefully depicts the friction between passion and repression (“Perhaps / my body would have liked to make some of our dates, / to come home at four in the morning and answer my scowl / with ‘None of your business!’ ”). In a sequence of nine poems, Pollitt turns to the Bible for inspiration, transforming some of the oldest tales of Western civilization into subversive modern parables: What if Adam and Eve couldn’t wait to leave Eden? What if God needs us more than we need him?

With these moving, vivid, and utterly distinctive poems, Katha Pollitt reminds us that poetry can be both profound and accessible, and reconfirms her standing in the first rank of modern American poets.

From the Hardcover edition.

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