



The Motive for Metaphor: Brief Essays on Poetry and Psychoanalysis

Henry M. Seiden

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This book is a small anthology: each chapter a kind of meditation-on poetry and psychoanalysis; on a poem, sometimes two; on poetry in general; on thought itself. The poems are beautiful, some are contemporary, some are classical and well worth a reader's attention. "The motive for metaphor" is the title of a short poem of Wallace Stevens in which he says he is "happy" with the subtleties of experience. He likes what he calls the "half colours of quarter things," as opposed to the certainties, the hard primary "reds" and "blues." To grasp and make sense of what is elusive (and beautiful), that is, for the essential and puzzling condition of poetry, we are obliged to make metaphors. The same is perhaps true of psychoanalysis-this is the essential argument of the book. The chapters were originally poetry columns that the author wrote for Psychologist-Psychoanalyst and Division/Review (both journals of the Division of Psychoanalysis of the American Psychological Association). The chapters are arranged alphabetically by poet but otherwise follow no conceptual order. The author hopes that they might be read that way too-the book to be picked up, a few chapters read and thought about, and then put aside for reading more at another time. With a Foreword by Nancy McWilliams, PhD.



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