



Unpacking the Boxes: A Memoir of a Life in Poetry

Donald Hall

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Donald Hall's invaluable record of the making of a poet begins with his childhood in Depression-era suburban Connecticut, where as the doted-upon son of dramatically thwarted parents he first realized poetry was "secret, dangerous, wicked, and delicious." Hall eloquently writes of the poetry and books that moved and formed him as a child and young man, and of adolescent efforts at poetry writing—an endeavor he wryly describes as more hormonal than artistic. His painful, formative days at Exeter are followed by a poetic self-liberation of sorts at Harvard and in the post-war university scene at Oxford.

After a failed first marriage Hall meets and marries Jane Kenyon, and the two poets return to Eagle Pond. Fittingly, the family home that loomed large in Hall's childhood is where he grows old, and at eighty learns finally "to live in the moment—as you have been told to do all your life."

Unpacking the Boxes is a revelatory and tremendously poignant memoir of one man's life in poetry.

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