



Becoming Poetry

Poets and Their Methods

JAY ROGOFF

In *Becoming Poetry*, Jay Rogoff closely inspects the work of two dozen poets, his forebears and his contemporaries, to reveal how their poetry achieves its impact upon readers. His essays, drawn from more than twenty years of literary criticism, explore how the staying power of a poet’s work and the likelihood of its enjoying a lasting identification with its creator depend on the skilled manipulation of poetic technique. Considering how poetry can manifest a vividly conceived world of feeling and sensation, Rogoff maintains that we understand and evaluate poets by the sum of their most persuasive inventive strategies, including their attention to form. The poet, finally, constructs a uniquely imagined universe and thus, in the minds of readers, becomes the poetry.

A model of practical criticism, intended for enthusiasts at all levels, *Becoming Poetry* demystifies how poetry operates on its audience to create a virtual, affective experience of lasting power and value.

JAY ROGOFF has published seven books of poetry, including *Loving in Truth: New and Selected Poems*. His literary criticism has appeared in the *Kenyon Review*, *Literary Imagination*, the *Southern Review*, and many other journals. He lives in Saratoga Springs, New York.

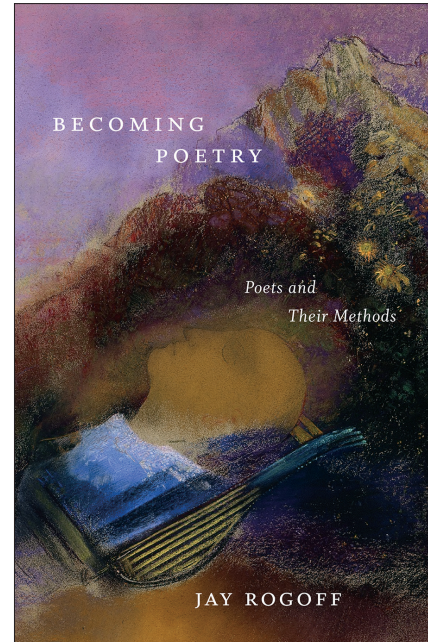
PRAISE FOR *BECOMING POETRY*

“Jay Rogoff, one of our most consistently interesting poets, shows he is also one of our best critics of poetry. *Becoming Poetry* features brilliant essays on the differences between poetry and song, Shakespeare’s sonnets, and Williams’s struggle with Pound in *Paterson*, and a deft survey of contemporary poets. On poetic accent and metrical form, he is profoundly instructive. Every lover of poetry will want this book.”—David Mikics, author of *Slow Reading in a Hurried Age*

“*Becoming Poetry* earns its title, marking the reciprocities between the poem and the means involved in writing it. Rogoff, a poet, brings a watchmaker’s attention to poems’ workings in arresting, precisely considered prose. The immersive process of becoming poetry, which Rogoff makes legible, discloses the most enduring symbiosis between language and being.”—JoEllen Kwiatek, author of *Study for Necessity*

“Rogoff earns a proud place in the grand tradition of the poet-critic. His experience with poetic craft yields insight, sympathy, and candor in discussing his fellow practitioners.”—Terence Diggory, author of *William Carlos Williams and the Ethics of Painting*

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