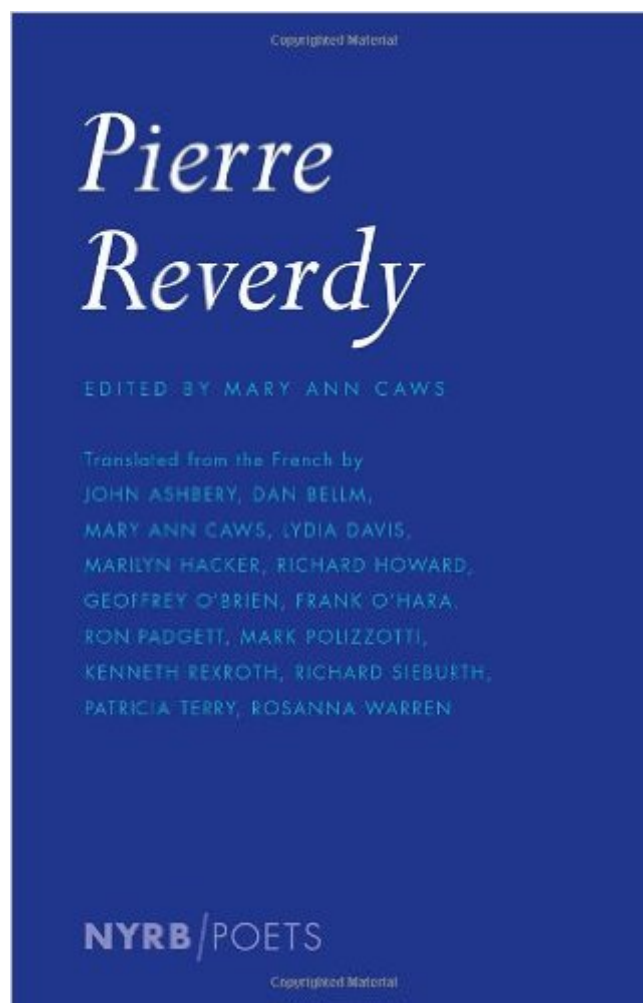


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Pierre Reverdy (New York Review Books Poets)



Synopsis

The great Pierre Reverdy, comrade to Picasso and Braque, peer and contemporary of Wallace Stevens and William Carlos Williams, is among the most mysteriously satisfying of twentieth-century poets, his poems an uncanny mixture of the simple and the sublime. Reverdy's poetry has exerted a special attraction on American poets, from Kenneth Rexroth to John Ashbery, and this new selection, featuring the work of fourteen distinguished translators, most of it appearing here for the first time, documents that ongoing relationship while offering readers the essential work of an extraordinary writer. Translated from the French by: John Ashbery, Dan Bell, Mary Ann Caws, Lydia Davis, Marilyn Hacker, Richard Howard, Geoffrey O'Brien, Frank O'Hara, Ron Padgett, Mark Polizzotti, Kenneth Rexroth, Richard Sieburth, Patricia Terry, Rosanna Warren.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a handsome little book that hopefully will turn more people on to this great, relatively obscure poet. The introduction is brief, but gives a nice context for the project. I particularly like the three different translations of "Chair vive" ("Live Flesh") from Frank O'Hara, Kenneth Rexroth (the translation I'm most familiar with), and Lydia Davis. Each translation betrays the translators' individual sensitivities in a unique and interesting way. All three have great ideas and by combining my favorite elements of each I get a better sense of the original poem's meaning. It would be nice to eventually have a larger collection available, but until then, this is a good, inexpensive entry into Reverdy's ethereal work.

Reverdy in all his poems carries the reader into beauty, joy, terror, and understanding. The years he lived, 1889-1960, took him through turbulent times, two world wars, and time's passage where the world heaved, came together; heaved, came together, etc. There is something about the ways his words speak to readers of both the qualities of light and "the thick of the night at sea" that engages and does not let go. This book is a selection of his work, often deemed experimental, Poems offered from the French by distinguished translators have been assembled with a lot of care. It is useful to have the chronology of Reverdy's life included and the French and the English for each poem on facing pages.

This is a perfect edition. Side by side with the original French. An extraordinary selection of translators, notably John Ashberry, Frank O'Hara. Who among us didn't come to Reverdy through O'Hara? The heart in his pocket - this is it!

Difficult poet (a bit overrated). Translations excellent. Too many prose poems. in the selection.

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