

All at Once: Prose Poems

C. K. Williams

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Short, sharp musings on things profound and mundane (and sometimes both) from the Pulitzer Prize winning poet

C. K. Williams has never been afraid to push the boundaries of poetic form?in fact, he's known for it, with long, lyrical lines that compel, enthrall, and ensnare. In *All at Once*, Williams again embodies this spirit of experimentation, carving out fresh spaces for himself and surprising his readers once more with inventions both formal and lyrical.

Somewhere between prose poems, short stories, and personal essays, the musings in this collection are profound, personal, witty, and inventive?sometimes all at once. Here are the starkly beautiful images that also pepper his poems: a neighbor's white butane tank in March "glares in the sunlight, raw and unseemly, like a breast inappropriately unclothed in the painful chill." Here are the tender, masterful sketches of characters Williams has encountered: a sign painter and skid-row denizen who makes an impression on the young soon-to-be poet with his "terrific focus, an intensity I'd never seen in an adult before." And here are a husband's hymns to his beloved wife, to her laughter, which "always has something keen and sweet to it, an edge of something like song."

This is a book that provokes pathos and thought, that inspires sympathy and contemplation. It is both fiercely representative of Williams's work and like nothing he's written before?a collection to be admired, celebrated, and above all read again and again.



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