



The Poem's Heartbeat: A Manual of Prosody (Copper Canyon Classics)

Alfred Corn

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An indispensable guide for poets, readers, students, and teachers.

"The Poem's Heartbeat may well be the finest general book available on prosody."—*Library Journal*
(starred review)

"A provocative, definitive manual."—*Publishers Weekly*

Finally back in print, this slender, user-friendly guide to rhyme, rhythm, meter, and form sparks "intuitive and technical lightning-flashes" for poets and readers curious to know a poem's inner workings. Clear, good-humored, and deeply readable, Alfred Corn's book is *the* modern classic on prosody—the art and science of poetic meter.

Each of the book's ten chapters is a progressive, step-by-step presentation rich with examples to illustrate concepts such as line, stress, scansion marks, slant rhyme, and iambic pentameter. "By the book's end," noted a rave review in *The Boston Review*, "Corn, magi-teacher and impeccable guide, has taught the novice to become artist and magician." *The Poem's Heartbeat* also includes a selected bibliography and encourages readers and students to carry their investigations further.

The word "line" comes from the Latin linea, itself derived from the word for a thread of linen. We can look at the lines of poetry as slender compositional units forming a weave like that of a textile. Indeed, the word "text" has the same origin as the word "textile." It isn't difficult to compare the compositional process to weaving, where thread moves from left to right, reaches the margin of the text, then shuttles back to begin the next unit . . .

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