



A Wave: Poems

By John Ashbery

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First published in 1984 and now appearing in a new edition, *A Wave* is widely considered one of Ashbery's finest books of poetry. The 44 pieces collected here--particularly the long title-poem--find the poet applying his uniquely lyric, meditative, and often hilarious sensibility to the mysterious and incessant curves and crests of love, art, thought, experience, and selfhood.

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Editorial Review

Review

"'Recklessness,' John Ashbery once observed, 'is what makes experimental art beautiful.' Ashbery . . . might have had his own formidably original poetry in mind, for a policy of calculated recklessness is central to his artistry. Ashbery's latest collection characteristically throws caution to the winds in pursuit of things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme. The results are exhilarating. To top it off, the 21-page title poem is easily Ashbery's finest single achievement since *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* won the Pulitzer Prize and vaulted him into national prominence. Ashbery's poems defy paraphrase. . . . Some of Ashbery's more solemn explicators miss--or undervalue--the strong element of humor in his work. There's a streak of sublime silliness in [*A Wave*]."--David Lehman, *Newsweek*

"The charm of Ashbery's urbane style--so various, so beautiful, so new--persists throughout *A Wave*, and will induce the rereadings the poems demand. It is a style that resists, in its glowing reflectiveness, the approaching darkness of the cimmerian moment."--Helen Vendler, *The New York Review of Books*

"In his eleventh major collection and especially in its long title poem, [Ashbery] has placed the vast prose vistas of *Three Poems* within the lyric measures he realized most explicitly in *Houseboat Days*. In retrospect, it seems an inevitable triumph; and the trio of *Three Poems*, *Houseboat Days*, and *A Wave* will probably be seen by his audience as the indispensable core of Ashbery's work."--Douglas Crase, *The Nation*

"Splendidly diverse . . . [a] superb and heartbreaking collection."--David St. John, *The Washington Post Book World*

About the Author

John Ashbery was born in Rochester, New York, in 1927 and educated at Harvard and Columbia. He is Charles P. Stevenson Jr., Professor of Language and Literature at Bard College and lives in New York City and Hudson, New York.

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