



The Confessional Poets (A Chicago Classic)

Robert Phillips

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Confessional poetry as a genre was first characterized by the critic M. L. Rosenthal in 1959. It has become a potent force, and its practitioners the poetic voices of our time. The poetry is highly subjective, written with frankness and lack of restraint, and focuses on the ugliness of life. Its leading practitioners, Robert Lowell, Anne Sexton, W. D. Snodgrass, and John Berryman, have all been recipients of the highest awards in literature, including the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award for Poetry.

Robert Phillips, a critic and also a poet, here directs our attention to the genre in the first book on the subject. In addition to the poets noted above, he discusses the work of Theodore Roethke, Sylvia Plath, Stanley Kunitz, Delmore Schwartz, and Allen Ginsberg.

Especially valuable are the author's definition and historical review of the genre and his use of interviews and personal comments. An appraisal of the genre, his book is also a guide to new avenues open to poets writing today.

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