



## Poetry of the Law: From Chaucer to the Present

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Since the time of Blackstone's "Farewell," poetry has been seen as celestial, pastoral, solitary, and mellifluous; law as venerable, social, urban, and cacophonous. This perception has persisted even to the present, with the burgeoning field of law and literature focusing almost exclusively on fiction and drama. *Poetry of the Law*, however, reveals the richness of poetry about the law.

*Poetry of the Law* is the first serious anthology of law-related poetry ever published in the United States. As the editors make clear, though, *serious* need not imply *solemn*. Instead, David Kader and Michael Stanford have assembled a surprisingly capacious collection of 100 poems from the 1300s to the present.

Set in courtrooms, lawyers' offices, law-school classrooms, and judges' chambers; peopled with attorneys, the imprisoned (both innocent and guilty), judges, jurors, witnesses, and law-enforcement officers; based on real events (think "Scottsboro") or exploring the complexity of abstract legal ideas; the poems celebrate justice or decry the lack of it, ranging in tone from witty to wry, sad to celebratory, funny to infuriating. *Poetry of the Law* is destined to become an authoritative source for years to come.

Contributors Include:

W. H. Auden

Robert Burns

Lewis Carroll

John Ciardi

Daniel Defoe

Emily Dickinson

John Donne

Rita Dove

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Martín Espada

Thomas Hardy

Seamus Heaney

A. E. Housman

Langston Hughes

Ben Jonson

X. J. Kennedy

Yusef Komunyakaa

Ted Kooser

D. H. Lawrence

Edgar Lee Masters

W. S. Merwin

Edna St. Vincent Millay

Sir Walter Raleigh

Muriel Rukeyser

Carl Sandburg

William Shakespeare

Jonathan Swift

Mona Van Duyn

Oscar Wilde

William Carlos Williams

from "The Hanging Judge" by Eavan Boland

Come to the country where justice is seen to be done,

Done daily. Come to the country where

Sentence is passed by word of mouth and raw

Boys split like infinitives. Look, here

We hanged our son, our only son

And hang him still and still we call it law.

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#### **Bernard Lewis:**

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#### **Jane Turcotte:**

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#### **Denise Adams:**

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