

DOWNLOAD PDF APPROACHING PRAYER: RITUAL AND THE SHAPE OF MYTH IN A.R. AMMONS AND JAMES DICKEY

Chapter 1 : Robert Kirschten (Author of Nighthawks and Irises)

Robert Kirschten, Approaching Prayer: Ritual and the Shape of Myth in A. R. Ammons and James Dickey. Southern Literary Studies. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, xxiii + pp. \$ A study that yokes A. R. Ammons with James Dickey might seem improbable. Stylistically, Ammons.

Wake Forest College now University , B. Nation, poetry editor, Naval Reserve, ; served in the South Pacific. Norton New York , NY , Norton New York, NY , Collected Poems, , W. The Form of a Motion, W. The Snow Poems, W. The Selected Poems, , W. Norton New York, NY , , expanded edition, Breaking Out, Palaemon, Selected Longer Poems, W. Changing Things, Palaemon, A Coast of Trees: The Really Short Poems of A. Contributor to Set in Motion: Ammons was born in rural North Carolina, and his experiences growing up on a cotton and tobacco farm during the Great Depression inspired a great deal of his verses. After the war, he completed his education, then held a variety of jobs before beginning his teaching career at Cornell University in Ammons once told the Winston-Salem Journal and Sentinel: I think I always wanted to be an amateur poet. Of those poets, Harold Bloom felt that the transcendentalists Emerson and Whitman have influenced Ammons the most. In his book *The Ringers in the Tower: While inheriting both the emancipation from strict metrical forms won by Ralph Waldo Emerson and the multiplicity of alternatives recognized by Walt Whitman* , Ammons brought to poetry a fidelity to the details of nature and a contemporary, conversational tone, thus revitalizing a significant portion of traditional American literature. According to Bloom, Ammons "illuminate[d] Emerson and all his progeny as much as he needs them for illumination. Writing in the *Ontario Review*, Stevens argued that the "ongoing flux" in *Tape for the Turn of the Year* "a long poem composed on an adding machine tape" works as "an almost perfect method to allow his notion of organic form to function," but that "no such wedding of form and content" occurs in another long poem, *Sphere: The Form of a Motion*. In the latter work, commented Stevens, "the looseness that Ammons believes in derives from the use of a form the poet has tried before. According to Robert B. Shaw in *Poetry*, Ammons did more than describe; he forced the reader to become involved. Essays on the Art of Poetry in the United States since that "Ammons rehearses a marginal, a transitional experience[;] he is a literalist of the imagination because the shore, the beach, or the coastal creek is not a place but an event, a transaction where land and water create and destroy each other, where life and death are exchanged, where shape and chaos are won and lost. Rosenthal wrote in *Shenandoah*: It is when one hears William Carlos Williams in the background of his voice that the poems work clearly and solidly. Poems are remarkably inclusive. The poem "Rapids," for example, begins "with a case for the superiority of autumn over spring and end[s] in the nature of the universe million years from now" all within 12 lines! He has been about this business for years now, but I notice in reading this new collection how much more secure his language has become. It is a fine place to begin for any reader not yet familiar with this poet who is determined to capture the shape and flow of the universe and to untell its dreams. In many poems that address the writing process, the poet related that writing is an ordering process while nature is a continuum in flux. Alice Fulton commented in a *Poetry* review: It was there that writing first developed, and antiquity serves as a backdrop for explorations of beginning and closure, of generative cycles. As in his other poems, Ammons pointed out the comforting aspects of nature. David McDuff observed in *Stand: If Ammons is, as I think, the central poet of my generation, because he alone has made a heterocosm, a second nature in his poetry, I deprecate no other poet by this naming. The title, suggested when Ammons drove by a Florida landfill, is characteristically flippant and yet perfectly serious. Poems contains more than poems, many about nature. Booklist reviewer Donna Seaman called it a "grand collection" and concluded by saying that Ammons "has a Zen point of view and a voice that harmonizes well with e. Ingebretsen called the poems "sinuous and surprisingly pared to the moment. Poems were written from and after. He addresses his growing physical infirmities and the loss of friends with some resignation, yet also with some evident anger, according to Danielle Chapman in a *Poetry* review. Chapman felt the poems*

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collected here still often indicate an impressive mind behind the pen, but she also noticed a lack of control that reveals itself in some of the cruder verses as if the poet "had seemingly lost the strength, or the will, to suppress his most banal thoughts. In an obituary for the Cornell Chronicle, Franklin Crawford wrote that Ammons was "quite literally, a modern poetical phenomenon. His influence over American letters is immeasurably profound, and, while his style may inspire comers of every stripe, his literary accomplishments are not likely to be duplicated in our time or any other. For what has become of Archie is also that he has given many of us the words with which we will continue to think about nature, art, death, life, and a good deal else. By this method he will outlive us all. Bloom, Harold, *The Ringers in the Tower*: Bloom, Harold, editor, *A. Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 5: Howard, Richard, Alone with America*: Kirschten, Robert, editor, *Critical Essays on A. Hall Boston, MA*, Kirschten, Robert, *Approaching Prayer: Ritual and the Shape of Myth in A. New Essays on A. Ingebretsen*, review of *Brink Road*: Ingebretsen, review of *Glare*, p. *The Later Long Poems of A. Three Contemporary Landscape Poets*," p. *Essays in Literature*, spring, , James S. *Georgia Review*, spring, , Jay Rogoff, review of *Glare*, p. *Highlights for Children*, March, , Ruth M. Kayak, Number 32, , Jascha Kessler, article on Ammons, p. *Kenyon Review*, fall, , David Baker, review of *Garbage*, pp. *Guillory*, review of *Brink Road*, p. *Paris Review*, summer, , David Lehman, "A. *Pembroke Magazine*, Number 18, special Ammons issue, Shaw, review of *Garbage*, pp. *Shenandoah*, fall, , M. *Southern Review*, autumn, , David Kirby, review of *Garbage*, pp. *The Religious Vision of A. Virginia Quarterly Review*, spring, , review of *Sumerian Vistas*, p. *A Profile of A. Ammons, 75, Poet of Eclectic Tastes*," p.

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