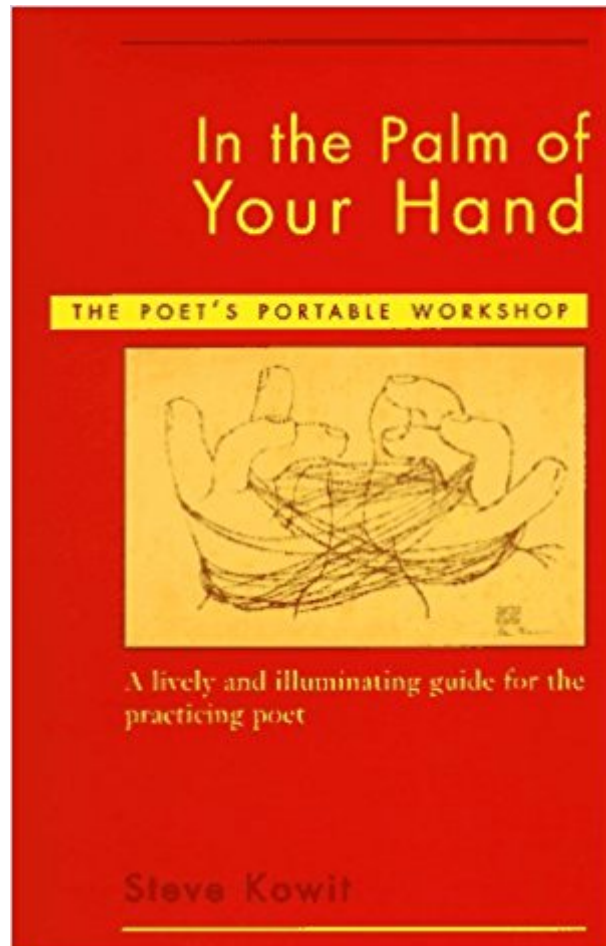


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In The Palm Of Your Hand: The Poet's Portable Workshop



Synopsis

An illuminating and invaluable guide for beginners wary of modern poetry, as well as for more advanced students who want to sharpen their craft and write poems that expand their technical skills, excite their imaginations, and engage their deepest memories and concerns. Ideal for teachers who have been searching for a way to inspire students with a love for writing--and reading--contemporary poetry. It is a book about shaping your memories and passions, your pleasures, obsessions, dreams, secrets, and sorrows into the poems you have always wanted to write. If you long to create poetry that is magical and moving, this is the book you've been looking for. Here are chapters on the language and music of poetry, the art of revision, traditional and experimental techniques, and how to get your poetry started, perfected, and published. Not the least of the book's pleasures are model poems by many of the best contemporary poets, illuminating craft discussions, and the author's detailed suggestions for writing dozens of poems about your deepest and most passionate concerns.

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Customer Reviews

I bought this book just on a whim. It sounded interesting, the reviewers thought it was pretty good and so I sent off for it. That was two years ago, and I have read and reread it pretty much constantly ever since. His style is friendly, engaging, encouraging, occasionally chiding (in the nicest possible way) and very very inspiring. Each section focuses on specific aspects of writing - writing from memories, working with imagery and metaphor, how (and why) to revise, word music, experimental

forms, traditional forms etc etc. Even a section on "Aweful Poems"! And believe it or not, that section was one of the most enlightening. He uses copious examples from contemporary poets to illustrate the points he is trying to get across, and ends each chapter with a series of exercises to make certain that you understand what you've been reading. Sounds tame, sounds boring, sounds mechanical, but oh, it is not! The final section - Nuts and Bolts - deals with the business of poetry as a business; the pros and cons of Poetry Workshops, where, when and why to start submitting your poetry. That sort of thing. And one of the nicest touches is the poem selected to end the book - Fleur Adcock's "Future Work" (on page 263, go on, have a look). It pretty much sums up the whole feeling of this book. The only downside is the certainty of writers cramp afterwards ...

What a helpful, inspiring book. The author really helps to make the writing process more productive and less intimidating. He clearly explains how to write different types of poems and gives excellent examples of the types of poems that he talks about. He makes the process much less mysterious and in the process, he inspires the reader. I hadn't had the courage to write any poetry for years. This book has helped me to finally start writing again.

As a writing major and tutor at UCSD, I have toted Kowit's book in my backpack as my constant and faithful companion. I've enjoyed witnessing my own as well as others' poetry, and writing in general, improve through the insightful suggestions in this book. As an instructor, Kowit encouraged me to "have fun" with my writing. This book echoes his personally delivered sentiment, since it masquerades as a fun way to approach writing, but actually is a serious tool for poets who are serious about their craft. This book helped me to examine my old, bad writing habits and ruts. Now, I hold my trite lines up for my own students to scoff at. If I improved, so could they. Under the tutelage of Kowit's warmth and wisdom, I finally am able to churn out good poetry that my professors compliment me for. No one can stop me now. Thank you, Steve Kowit, for putting this one in the palm of my hand!

Steve Kowit's poetry workshop book is an excellent resource for anyone for wants to improve his poetry. Writing good poetry is an acquired skill and this book will help you obtain those skills needed to create works of art, not artifice. Particularly helpful are the exercises he suggests based on the chapter topic. For example, his first chapter on memories has an exercise in which you are asked to list various memories then choose one to write about. I wrote one of my best recent poems from that exercise. Sometimes there is either too much to write about or too little, so this book focuses you on

a specific topic or style and this brings you down a path to a poem. Not all the exercises are appealing, so you might find yourself picking and choosing or going back to an exercise you overlooked before. Also, Kowitz includes great examples of well crafted poetry so you can see what the masters have done with a particular device, style, or subject matter. He also explains well different poetic forms and themes. There are chapters on experimental poetics that are quite interesting for a change of pace, like "found" or "cut-up" poems. Do try some of these explorations! The last few chapters focus on workshopping and publishing. Some of this advice is very helpful and sobering. You cannot go wrong with Kowitz book.

This book came to me as an exercise work book. I started it and realized that he was reaching a goal with the way he handled the teachings. His way of explaining how a style was built from the bottom up and the steps, as in one chapter after another, made creating so easy. I stuck to each and every lesson and poem assignment. If it meant research, I took a trip to the library. An adventure in trying different styles! I would put my mind, body and soul into what I would put on paper. We all know that writers have to write. Some of my old poems were redone with his ideas. My friends saw my revised poems and went "Oh WOW! And this is from the studies from this book?" A compliment for me and applause for his lessons. I highly suggest any poet, beginner, intermediate or advanced, to do read this book. AND I would suggest going back and redoing the exercises from the start. It was from my open-mindedness and my perseverance that would have me do each exercise. It wasn't work anymore, it was fun!!

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