
William Stafford

You Must
Revise
Your Life

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Stafford reflects on the writing process and on the influences on his art

You Must Revise Your Life Details

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Patricia says

We were born poets
Who Knew

I came to this book via a reference in one of Lori Jakiela's poems.

Sandra says

Sometimes very astute, sometimes tries to hard to be the guru...His poem, A Course in Creative Writing is very good, which of course, means very reassuring...

Bridgett says

A friend once said to me that she was pretty sure William Stafford is God. After reading this, I'd have to agree.

Wade Fox says

I like this book for both his views on writing and teaching. It is interesting to see how his "passivist" view of teaching correlates with the current ideas of student-centered teaching.

Henry says

Excellent insight into Stafford's writing habits and style. Inspiring for any writer or writer wanna-be as his heavy use of metaphors creates visuals that go far beyond the words he uses.

Sandra says

There are some 5 star parts in this book and I still highly recommend it, but it is a little disjointed and anecdotal.

Julene says

William Stafford's poetry and his writing about poetry inspires me and helps me keep writing.

Helen says

If you want to better understand how William Stafford approaches writing, this book may help with that. Through a combination of essays, poetry and interviews, Stafford presents what I can only describe as a kind of philosophy of writing, including his approach to helping others find their own voice. "Every Morning All Over Again" sums up his process more beautifully than I ever could, so here you go:

Every Morning All Over Again

Only the world guides me.
Weather pushes, or when it entices
I follow. Some kind of magnetism
turns me when I am walking
in the woods with no intentions.

There are leadings without any
reason, but they attract;
if I find there is nothing to gain
from them, I still follow—their power
is the power of the surrounding world.

But things that promise, or those
that will serve my purposes—they
interfere with the pure wind
from nowhere that sustains a kite,
or a gull, or a free spirit.

So, afloat again every morning,
I find the current: all the best
rivers have secret channels that
you have to find by whispering
like this, and then hear them and follow

— William Stafford

Vera says

3.6 stars

David says

I can't imagine a more useful or insightful book that concerns itself with where poetry comes from, how it's formed, and the attention to how it sounds (the syllables, etc.). I think the interviews are the best, especially "Performing and Poetry" and "A Witness for Poetry". I've always loved Stafford's poems, which he defines as "talking without mistakes". I have a copy of Stafford reading at the University of Iowa and, true to form, it's hard to distinguish when he is talking in between poems or actually reading the poems. A true original.

Bob says

The second in a series of several books about William Stafford in the Poets on Poetry series. Kinda thin, it wouldn't be my recommendation to read this before Crossing Unmarked Snow or The Answers Are Inside the Mountains, but worth getting around to eventually.

It contains interviews with Stafford, and articles by him on the craft of writing and the teaching of poetry.
