



On Imagination

Mary Ruefle

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"It is impossible for me to write about the imagination; it is like asking a fish to describe the sea," Mary Ruefle announces at the start of her essay. With wit and intellectual abandon, Ruefle draws inspiration from Wittgenstein, Shakespeare, Jesus, Steve Jobs, Johnny Cash, and Emily Dickinson to explore her subject. The chapbook features original interior illustrations.

Mary Ruefle is the author of numerous volumes of poetry and prose, including *Madness, Rack, and Honey: Collected Lectures*, a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award in Criticism, and *Selected Poems*, winner of the William Carlos Williams Award from the Poetry Society of America.

On Imagination Details

Date : Published July 25th 2017 by Sarabande Books

ISBN : 9781941411476

Author : Mary Ruefle

Format : Paperback 32 pages

Genre : Poetry, Nonfiction, Writing, Essays, Language, Literary Fiction

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From Reader Review On Imagination for online ebook

Liz Harmer says

breathtaking work.

Jessica says

I was a little resentful of paying \$9.99 for a 30 page pamphlet (which is fully illustrated, so 15 pages of text), but it's Mary Ruefle. So I bought it, and I was right to.

Hákon Gunnarsson says

This chapbook contains one essay, Mary Ruefle's "On Imagination", it's 32 pages, and half them are illustrated. So those looking for a lot for the money spent on a book, probably shouldn't buy this one. That being said, I think it is a beautiful chapbook.

The essay is interesting, and thought provoking, and I'm probably going to read it again. Imagination is one of those things that may to some sound simple to define, but is a little more illusive than that. Mary Ruefle does a good job here at bringing out the various ways imagination can work, and how it is to work with it. In my view, it is definitely worth the read.

Sally says

Oh my goodness. I loved this.

Carol says

The price of whimsy

If you can imagine paying for 100 or so words, quotes, or goats, buy this flash essay, and read it in your attic.

Mary Anne says

A lovely little book that is large on image and poetic spirit. A book to reread often when the world becomes too little engaged in imagination and its possibilities.

Nina CW says

?“The imagination has its own life and its own autonomy, the imagination is not what you play with, the imagination plays with you. It has the power to both create and destroy, to both inform and deform.”

?This essay on imagination is gold. So many amazingly bizarre and perfect analogies that put into words the beauty and power of imagination. Mary Ruefle proves that imagination and thinking go hand-in-hand, despite the fact that many people who would consider themselves to be the logical, “thinker” types would not consider themselves to also be creative or imaginative. But sometimes, an overactive imagination could be proof of even thinking too much. We are the people who relive every conversation of our day and imagine what everyone must be thinking of us. We are the people who hear a loud noise coming from outside of our house and decide it must be a monster or terrorist dead set on destroying us. It’s true that our imagination will play with us more often than we play with it. It’s also true that most of our worries, fears, anxieties, and insecurities likely stem from our imaginations getting the better of us. It is a beautiful, dangerous, wonderful thing.

St Fu says

When she talked about the goat, there was only a picture of the grass it ate and I feared and assumed I would reach the end without her drawing it. Of course, I was free to imagine the goat on my own but while reading, I forgot I was allowed to do so. In fact, I admit that even while fearing and assuming and forgetting, I did actually imagine that goat but didn't allow myself to know it. In the end, she did draw us a goat and I was relieved and gave her 4 stars.

Jane says

Mary is astonishing as always

Mimi says

“I once sat next to a young woman at dinner who believed that the CIA had bugged her salad, and it terrified her, and she was unable to live a normal life because of her imagining this terrible thing, and I think this is a negative aspect of the imagination.

Later I thought: well, she had a marvellous point after all, because very often when washing lettuces I find a slug, and my lettuce really is “bugged,” and I thought my thought was a positive aspect, because I was using my imagination when I had this thought.”

Poet Mary Ruefle’s beautifully-presented essay - or more a series of thoughts and musings around the concept of imagination - reads like a playful, personal, exquisite prose poem.

Jim Coughenour says

I imagine that I love Mary Ruefle, and it's true. I do love her. I love her imagination. I have no opinion on the goat.

Avery Guess says

I love Mary Ruefle's brain. Every time I read something of hers, I feel as though I am more myself, or closer to being that person I want to be. I'm not sure how to explain it, otherwise. "On Imagination" is a fabulous short essay that explores Ruefle's (and other writers) thoughts on what we call the imagination. It is accompanied by lovely illustrations by Kristen Radtke. Definitely recommend picking this up.

Deniss says

Estoy muy feliz por haber encontrado (dos veces, además) a Mary Ruefle. Qué grande este libro tan chiquito. Qué ganas de abrazar a la cabra en el ático. ??

S says

Wise and creative....as she always is....

Vincent Scarpas says

"A man taught art at a university. When he came home after work his daughter asked him what he did that day. He said, 'I taught people how to draw.' And she said, 'People forget how to draw?' Artists are just people who have not forgotten how to draw, by which I mean create. But don't be taken in; they have forgotten a great many other things. Sometimes they forget they are no longer eight years old. This is why artists are of a troublesome nature."
