



Family Values

Wendy Cope

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

Family Values

Wendy Cope

Family Values Wendy Cope

From a motorway service area to her ambivalent relationship with religion, Wendy Cope covers a wide range of experience in her new collection. Her mordant humour and formal ingenuity are in evidence, even as she remembers the wounds of a damaging childhood; and in poems about love and the inevitable problems of aging she achieves an intriguing blend of sadness and joy. Two very different sets of commissioned poems round off a remarkable volume, whose opening poem sounds clearly the profound note of compassion which underlies the whole.

Family Values Details

Date : Published April 7th 2011 by Faber and Faber (first published April 1st 2011)

ISBN : 9780571274215

Author : Wendy Cope

Format : Hardcover 80 pages

Genre : Poetry, Nonfiction, Poetry Plays

 [Download Family Values ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Family Values ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Family Values Wendy Cope

From Reader Review Family Values for online ebook

Stuart Estell says

The usual mixture of whimsy and crushing emotions from Ms. Cope. Well worth a look - many of these have lots of depth and will certainly stand up to repeated reading.

The closing poem about Alice Arnold reading the shipping forecast on Radio 4 is superb.

Cathy Geagan says

I'm an unabashed fan of Wendy Cope. She's not the most prolific of poets, but her keen eye when observing the everyday and mundane means I often return to her relatively slight output. The verse may be light but the subjects addressed can be weighty, and despite the surface simplicity Cope is extremely technically skilled, employing the full range of traditional rhymed forms. She reminds me of Philip Larkin, and if you know me you'll know that's high praise indeed.

I just read her collection Family Values for the first time (despite it being five years old by now). She is as grumpy and deadpan as ever, but with a focus on death and decay that suggest perhaps the serious concerns are ever closer to the forefront of her mind. The fifty six poems in this collection span a human life, from childhood Christmases to detailed (hilarious) instructions for how to behave at her funeral. Despite the increasing awareness of mortality permeating the collection, Cope still has Larkin's gift for "...skilled/Vigilant, flexible/Unemphasised, enthralled/Catching of happiness..." and it's in these moments she speaks most to me:

April

The birds are singing loudly overhead,
As if to celebrate the April weather.
I want to stay in this lovely world forever
And be with, my love, and share your bed.

I don't believe I will see you when we're dead.
I don't believe we'll meet and be together.
The birds are singing loudly overhead.
I want to stay in this lovely world forever.

<https://eatsplantsreadsbooks.wordpress.com/>

Rebecca says

(2.5) Cope mostly uses recognizable forms (villanelles, sonnets, etc.): this is interesting to see in contemporary poetry, but requires a whole lot of rhyming, most of it rather twee (e.g. "tuppence/comeuppance"), which gives the whole collection the feeling of being written for children. This is appropriate for the poems that recall memories of childhood, but not so much for the others, such as "The Audience," a long sequence commissioned by a string quartet.

I reckon there's more similarity to Gervase Phinn or Pam Ayres in this collection than Cope would really like to be her reputation.

My two favorites were "Lissadell," about a vacation to Ireland, and "Haiku," perfect in its simplicity:

A perfect white wine
is sharp, sweet and cold as this:
birdsong in winter.

Lera says

Read this over a couple of hours yesterday evening at Tullich. Warm, well-chosen words. This felt like a meander through her childhood and on into her sixties or so. Plus some gentle laughs at the expense of Radio 4.

Ryan Williams says

More than any poet since Betjeman, Wendy Cope has the rare gift of being funny and serious - often in the same poem. That is crucial. Beneath the jaunty villanelles, the comic repetitions and the triple-metre, some hard truths about life and love are being smuggled in.

One favourite is the poem 'April'. I quote it here in full:

'The birds are singing loudly overhead
As if to celebrate the April weather.
I want to stay in this lovely world forever
And be with you, my love, and share your bed.

I don't believe I'll see you when we're dead.
I don't believe we'll meet and be together.
The birds are singing loudly overhead.
I want to stay in this lovely world forever.'

Like Auden's 'Lullaby', the poem gains its power and maturity from cherishing what it knows is only temporary.

Two other poems, 'Health Scare' and 'Keep Saying This', are franker confrontations with illness and death: rhyme and repetition become charms to keep despair at bay ('It helps to say their names and make them rhyme'). You can't help being reminded that 'Ring-a-ring-of-roses' was originally written about the Black Death.

Accepting futility doesn't mean going down without a fight. Cope's sharp (but never withering) sense of humour can deliver wicked, one-two combinations to the head, as in 'Special Needs', 'Unbearable', 'Football', and 'Differences of Opinion':

'He tells her the earth is flat -

He knows the facts, and that is that.
In altercations, fierce and long
She tries her best to prove him wrong.
But he has learned to argue well.
He calls her arguments unsound
And often asks her not to yell.
She cannot win. He stands his ground.

The planet goes on being round.'

Cope's quality control system is as sound as ever. Her collections may be few, but they're always worth waiting for. A worthy addition to the Cope canon and a treat for readers everywhere.

Isabell says

I didn't enjoy this collection quite as much as the other volume I read by her, *Serious Concerns*, but it was still very likeable and a nice way to spend the hour I had by myself in the library today. One reason I didn't quite enjoy this one as much was, perhaps, that it felt a little too cynical to me. In quite a few of her poems here, an embittered elderly lady peeked through, and while it's an attestation to her skill as a poet to let us catch glimpses of her as a person, I ended up feeling a bit sorry for her. There is a fine line between sarcasm and cynicism, and I thought this one was perhaps a little too heavy on the latter.

She works through some childhood issues in this volume, especially in the beginning chapters, and whenever she treats the topic with reverence, I was very moved by it. There is a poem that is dedicated to a Mrs Arnolds of what I can only assume to be her former boarding school. It's moving and sad and is underslung with that childhood longing for a parent that simply loves and accepts you. Other poems discuss what seems to be a complex relationship between mother and child, dating, love, hypocrisy, ageing and death, daytime television, the BBC; some are commissioned by a string quartet.

It's hard to find a unifying theme to this volume or to her works, but if there is one, it's perhaps best searched for in the first poem in this collection. It reads like a modern Christmas carol, and for all her ranting about religion and misogyny in later poems, I thought this one struck the perfect balance between intuition, social commentary, compassion, and wit. It seems to chant subtly that we lose something very human when we start paying too much attention to rituals, forms, and castes - closed spaces. In the end, we all struggle for room in the pews of acceptance and have simply come to hear a bit of nice music from the choir.

Colin says

I love Wendy Cope, but have to confess that I was slightly disappointed in this, her fourth collection of poems. Her first two books, *Making Cocoa for Kingsley Amis* and *Serious Concerns* sparkled with wit and invention. There's plenty of humour in *Family Values* and Cope's mastery of a wide range of poetic forms is in evidence (I love a good villanelle!), but I was a little underwhelmed by some of the poems in this collection. Cope covers a variety of themes, including an unhappy childhood (one of the best poems in the book, *Daily Help*, is in this section), and two series of commissioned poems, one for the Endellion Quartet and one for the BBC.

Laura Macdonald says

I love Wendy Cope's poetry. She is one of my favourite contemporary poets. Her poems are moving, accessible, beautifully constructed with a strong wit which is often bitter sweet. This volume of poetry covers all of that and so much more. A particular favourite is 'A Villanelle for Hugo Williams' which made me put Hugo Williams on my list of 'To read' even if just to check if he did get the rhyme scheme right.

James says

Always a pleasure to read WC!

Kate O'Hanlon says

There is a lot here about aging and death, which is not terribly relevant to me right now* but I'll keep the book on shelf the the twilight years.

The second half of the book has a lovely sequence of poems about various people at a concert, and another sequence about the Beeb, both of which I enjoyed.

Unfortunately there's nothing here to match my great love for Cope's previous collections.

*Not that aging and death can't be written about in a way that is relevant and interesting to young (or, let's be honest here, young-ish) people, but Copes poems on these subjects are very personal and lacking a broad universalism.

Tony says

This is a slim collection of Cope's poems published in 2012. The first section is poetry about family, which is good and occasionally great. I particularly liked 'A Christmas Song', 'The Women's Merchant Navy', 'At Stafford Services', 'At the Poetry Conference', 'Anniversary Poem', 'Spared' and 'Another Valentine' from this section. Then there's a second section, which is from something called 'The Audience', which were written for the Endymion String Quartet. These are great. Funny. As are those from the final section, which are from an 'An ABC of the BBC'. These were commissioned by BBC Radio 4. Again they're pretty funny. There's one called 'Football' about Radio 5 6-0-6 show that I liked a lot.

Definitely worth reading. I tend to read people's work from beginning to end, which I think makes me think I can see patterns emerging, but sometimes that's impossible to do. It's also good to realise that you don't know as much as you think you know about things.

It certainly wants to make me read her other three poetry collections.

Jim Coughenour says

Wendy Cope has more fun with poetic forms than anyone since Dorothy Parker. I'd need a good hour with Lewis Turco to figure out all she's up to in her latest collection, although the sometimes villainous villanelles are unmissable. (Poor Hugo Williams.)

My favorite poems in this book are the first and last – "A Christmas Song" asks *Why is the baby crying?* and provides a rhyme book of clever answers; and "Closedown" about a woman reading the shipping news late at night. There are merry moments in between, but not nearly as many as in *Making Cocoa for Kingsley Amis*. So what? Anything new by Wendy is worth snapping up, sighs and tears and wry bits of rueful wisdom all whipped together and laid out in a lattice of laughter.

Sherry says

There is something about Wendy Cope's poetic voice that resonates deeply with me. I'm not sure what it is, but there you have it. The only reason I've given this work 4 out of 5 instead of the full star rating, is because her earlier poem *The Teacher's Tale* (featured in *If I Don't Know*) has to be the most moving poem I have ever read, and that got the full 5 stars in my book. But this is a great collection, I really enjoy the warmth and wit in these works! :)

!Tæmbu?u says

KOBOBOOKS

Reviewed by The Independent

Swarnadeep Banik says

the second wendy cope book that i have read, but it missed the perfect five star marks because of the first few poems in this book. i found them too personal, and i couldn't connect to them. but, later, the book just drove in my mind smoothly. i love her poems which contains the element of serious levity carefully and delicately. it's like she wrote the poems with utter delight, and her power of rhyming is strong, very strong. i have also loved the later experimental poems in the end. overall, a sumptuous read, utterly delightful.
