



You are Happy

Margaret Atwood

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poetry

You are Happy Details

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From Reader Review You are Happy for online ebook

Alexa says

There's something very friendly and pleasing about these small poetry collections, the way they can be carried around and dipped into as one has a moment here and a moment there. I quite enjoyed the structure of this! It starts off with the ironic, sad "You Are Happy" section, full of poems of loss and endings and fights and similar negative emotions, then it moves on to the "Songs of the Transformed," funny, joyful poems, then we move on to "Circe/Mud Poems," poems about the transformer Circe herself, and her own reluctant transformation into a lover, and then finally "There is Only One of Everything." This last section touched me the most - these seemed to be poems about mature, happy, settled relationships; the young fighters have been transformed into contented lovers and I loved it!

Dawn Hukai says

Delightful poetry!

Shannon Donovan says

"So much for the gods and their
static demands. our demands, former
demands, death patterns
obscure as fragments of an
archaeology, these frescoes
on a crumbling temple
wall we look at now and can scarcely
piece together

history
is over, we take place
in a season, an undivided
space, no necessities

hold us closed, distort
us. I lean behind you, mouth touching
your spine, my arms around
you, palm above the heart,
your blood insistent under
my hand, quick and mortal"
Pg 95

Mary says

I read this in my late teens and never realized what an influence it had on my own poetry until recently.

Replete with EYE imagery and Atwood's trademark irony.

Eirin says

This book of poetry has become one of my favourites. From the start I instantly understood I would love Atwood's poetry. I haven't read any of her other fiction, but I surely will.

The poetry is both moving, sensual, sad, angry and at times even funny. I love how she covers such vast topics, yet manages to make the book feel whole and interconnected. Her Circe/Mud Poems were delicious to the literary feminist in me, and everything else appealed to everything else in me, simply. The language flows so easily, yet is complex and thought provoking. The way she plays with line breaks and the meanings of words made me all giddy. And then there is the tone of strength running through every one of the poems.

I loved several of the poems, and read them again and again. Still two sticks out very clearly in my mind after finishing the book: "Song of the Fox" and "Late August". The fox-poem was so harsh and sad, it really crept under my skin. It might be my personal favourite. "Late August" was both endearing, sweet, warm and moving, and at the same time there's this current of sadness running beneath it. Brilliance.

Marvellous poetry, no doubt about it.

Amy Layton says

I feel a little embarrassed to admit that I didn't know that Atwood wrote poetry, but I'm so glad that I now know--it's truly something to behold. Her poetry is absolutely wonder and stunning and amazing, and written in her very own Margaret Atwood way. I slowly took the time to read her poems instead of accidentally speeding through like I usually do. They're just absolutely stunning. I suggest reading these alongside any of Dworkin's works, reading these on the metro, while you're eating, about to go to work...actually, just read these doing absolutely anything. These poems will linger with you long after you read them.

Review cross-listed here!

Amy says

It's 1974. Can this seemingly insecure poet really be the brilliant Margaret Atwood of the future? Why yes. "Songs of the Transformed" and "Circe/Mud Poems" already contain the the DNA that will evolve (or rather be genetically engineered) into MaddAddam's pigeons:

*This is what you changed me to:
a greypink vegetable with slug
eyes, buttock
incarnate, spreading like a slow turnip...*

mwpm says

Memory is not in the head
only. It's midnight,
you existed once, you exist

again, my entire skin
sensitive as an eye,

imprint of you
glowing against me,
burnt-out match in a dark room.

- **Memory**, pg. 11

* * *

The water turns
a long way down over the raw stone,
ice crusts around it

We walk separately
along the hill to the open
beach, unused
picnic tables, wind
shoving the brown waves, erosion, gravel
rasping on gravel.

In the ditch a deer
carcass, no head. Bird
running across the glaring
road against the low pink sun.

When you are this
cold you can think about
nothing but the cold, the images

hitting into your eyes
like needles, crystals, you are happy.

- **You Are Happy**, pg. 28

* * *

This is the one song everyone
would like to learn: the song
that is irresistible:

the song that forces me

to leap overboard in squadrons
even though they see the beached skulls

the song nobody knows
because anyone who has heard it
is dead, and the others can't remember.

Shall I tell you the secret
and if I do, will you get me
out of this bird suit?

I don't enjoy it here
squatting on this island
looking picturesque and mythical

with these two feathery maniacs,
I don't enjoy singing
this trio, fatal and valuable.

I will tell the secret to you,
to you, only to you.
Come closer. This song

is a cry for help: Help me!
Only you, only you can,
you are unique

at last. Alas
it is a boring song
but it works every time.

- **Siren Song**, pg. 38-39

* * *

My face, my other face
stretching over it like
rubber, like flowers opening
and closing, like rubber,
like liquid steel,
like steel. Face of steel.

Look at me and see your reflection.

- *from* **Circle / Mud Poems**, pg. 56

I. says

wonderful.

Michelle says

The Circe poems are some of the most incredible things I've ever read. I come back to them every few years and read them obsessively, over and over, for a day or two. A wonderful commentary on ancient epics, the power of story, the role of women in heroic tales, and so much more.

Sylvester says

Even her titles grab me. "You are Happy" - I mean, that puzzles me. That's a poem I have to read right away. And "There is only One of Everything"? Someone liked the poems of this library copy I have enough to rip out the pages they liked, leaving me with a mystery - how am I happy? or who is happy? I had to look it up online. Oh, the other thing I like about Atwood, she uses Greek mythology a lot. An example:

Siren Song

*This is the one song everyone
would like to learn: the song
that is irresistible:*

*the song that forces men
to leap overboard in squadrons
even though they see the beached skulls*

*the song nobody knows
because anyone who has heard it
is dead, and the others can't remember.*

*Shall I tell you the secret
and if I do, will you get me
out of this bird suit?*

*I don't enjoy it here
squatting on this island
looking picturesque and mythical*

*with these two feathery maniacs,
I don't enjoy singing
this trio, fatal and valuable.*

*I will tell the secret to you,
to you, only to you.
Come closer. This song*

*is a cry for help: Help me!
Only you, only you can,
you are unique*

*at last. Alas
it is a boring song
but it works every time.*

Margaret Atwood

Hobart Frolley says

very moving and beautiful

Meghan says

There were some really knockout poems in this collection, but overall it didn't leave me with a strong impression--possibly because so many of the works were published earlier in different collections. It all felt a bit patched together for me, which was a shame, because Margaret Atwood is incredible.

Stephany says

Recommended to me based on my own writing, this is one of my favorite books. Hers is a voice of power. She inhabits what she chooses and tells it like it is. Uncompromising. Full of terrifying beauty. "The story is ruthless" indeed.

Sebastian says

If I abandoned a baby with nothing but this book and instructions to return to society a poet, I would have created a genius.

Atwood's sense of motion and development of metaphor is astounding, magnificent, horrifying, the lucid and sparse descriptions, it's as if she said "I want to show you where I live" and at the end of the tour we went into her closet and ended up in my closet.
