

Rabbit Ears: TV Poems

Edited by
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Preface

I grew up on *The Honeymooners* reruns, *Batman*, and *The Carol Burnett Show*, but waited until late 2011 to write my first television-themed poems. I produced two, one that imagined lost episodes of *The Dick Van Dyke Show* and the other on Bob Crane, he of *Hogan's Heroes* and seedy extra-curricular activities.

January 2012. With my pair of TV poems still drying, it occurred to me that I had never seen an anthology of poetry about the medium that has influenced our language, our perceptions of the world, our politics, our economy, our opinions, and our tastes and interests. I conducted the requisite due diligence and determined it hadn't been done.

The absence to date of a poetry anthology about TV naturally raised a question in my mind: How many poets have written about the topic? I admit I had some trepidation when I drafted the invitation to submit. Would the concept generate sufficient interest and, consequently, material to fill up the space between front and back covers?

Crossing my fingers, I sent the first set of invitations on April 6, 2012. To my very pleasant surprise, I received close to 20 submissions within three days. My conclusion: I'm on to a good thing.

The submission period lasted five and a half months. I received work from 300 or so poets; I read and evaluated roughly 800 poems. The book you're holding contains 129 poems by 130 poets (one poem is a collaborative effort). I'm gratified beyond my ability to express it that so many of the poets in *Rabbit Ears* wrote new work exclusively for this volume or contributed previously unpublished poems. We'd like to extend a special word of thanks to Billy Collins for suggesting the title *Rabbit Ears*.

I'm listed as the sole editor of *Rabbit Ears*, but in a sense all the contributing poets are co-editors. Their rich and engaging work directed me to subjects, perspectives, and themes I hadn't considered. TV is a vast and protean medium that tries to appeal to anyone and everyone. I sought to produce a book that captured TV's dizzying variety and, above all, an

anthology that would be fun to read. Thanks to the 130 poets in these pages, I'm convinced we accomplished our goals.

Any anthology bears the stamp of its editor's identity and tastes. In my case, professional experience exerted a strong influence. Unlike most poets, I'm not in academia. Nor am I a passive TV viewer. My career was in business, specifically public relations. My last position was director of media relations for a national not-for-profit organization. I dealt with producers and reporters for national TV shows like *Nightly Business Report* and *60 Minutes* and at local news stations throughout the United States. I prepared senior executives and other spokespeople for interviews. That knowledge and experience informed the way I selected some of the work, particularly the poems dealing with broadcast news and coverage of war.

An abundance of voices and forms makes up *Rabbit Ears*. In the following pages, you'll read narrative poems, persona poems, poems that employ found text, formal poems, prose poems, haiku and senryu, and poems that incorporate non-poetic forms, like the interview and screenplay. They explore a robust array of subjects: the history and early days of TV, sit-coms, children's programming, the news, horror and science fiction, detective shows, soap operas and romance, reality TV, and commercials, among others. The poems are funny, poignant, witty, mysterious, and educational. In short, the poems are much like TV itself.

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to *Rabbit Ears*. Happy reading!

Joel Allegretti, Editor
December 2015