



Deaths of the Poets

By Michael Symmons Roberts; Paul Farley

Jonathan Cape, 2017. Hardcover. Condition: New. From Chatterton's Pre-Raphaelite demise to Keats's death warrant in a smudge of arterial blood; from Dylan Thomas's eighteen straight whiskies to Sylvia Plath's desperate suicide in the gas oven of her Primrose Hill kitchen or John Berryman's leap from a bridge onto the frozen Mississippi, the deaths of poets have often cast a backward shadow on their work. The post-Romantic myth of the dissolute drunken poet – exemplified by Thomas and made iconic by his death in New York – has fatally skewed the image of poets in our culture. Novelists can be stable, savvy, politically adept and in control, but poets should be melancholic, doomed and self-destructive. Is this just a myth, or is there some essential truth behind it: that great poems only come when a poet's life is pushed right to an emotional knife-edge of acceptability, safety, security? What is the price of poetry? In this book, two contemporary poets undertake a series of journeys – across Britain, America and Europe – to the death places of poets of the past, in part as pilgrims, honouring inspirational writers, but also as investigators, interrogating the myth. The result is a book that...



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