The Cambridge Introduction to Poetic Form

This lively and accessible book explores the ways in which poetic form itself forms, and may indeed transform, a poem’s ‘meaning’. After a chapter on the elements of form (such as rhythm, metre, rhyme, and stanza), subsequent chapters open out into generic considerations of lyric, the sonnet, elegy, soliloquy, dramatic monologue, and ballad and narrative. Unlike most existing works on the subject, this book is not so much interested in mapping, classifying, and listing as it is in evaluating the aesthetic possibilities that attend different kinds of form. Carefully and closely engaging with a wide range of examples, and building on relevant scholarship, The Cambridge Introduction to Poetic Form provides help to undergraduates and more advanced readers alike through its sustained examination of how poems express themselves as poetry.

Michael D. Hurley is a Fellow and Director of Studies in English at Robinson College, Cambridge. He has written widely on English literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with an emphasis on poetry and poetics. His book on G. K. Chesterton’s literary thinking was published in 2012, and he is currently working on A History of Poetics: From Classical Antiquity to the Present (forthcoming with Cambridge University Press).

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Contents

Acknowledgements page vii
Note on Texts ix

Introduction 1

1 The Elements of Poetic Form 16

2 Lyric 53

3 The Sonnet 76

4 Elegy 100

5 Epic 120

6 Soliloquy 145

7 Dramatic Monologue 167

8 Ballad and Narrative 189

Notes 213
Index 237
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Note on Texts