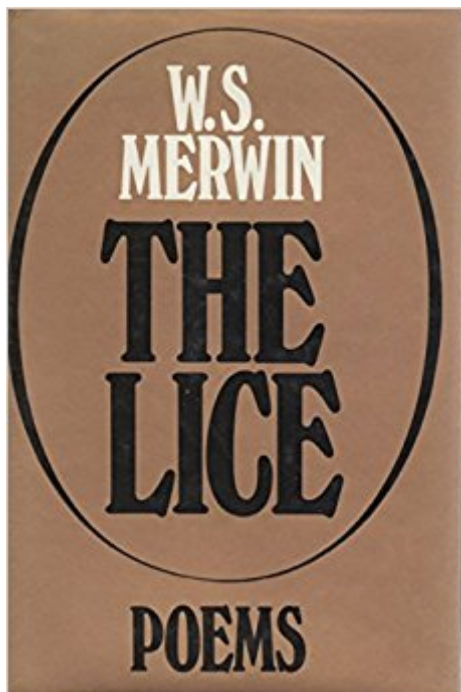


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The Lice



Synopsis

This Fiftieth Anniversary edition celebrates one of the most ground-breaking books in American poetry. When first published in 1967, W.S. Merwin's *The Lice* was ground-breaking. Its visionary urgency directly engaged the nexus of aesthetics and morality, exerting an immediate and lasting effect on the writing and reading of poetry. Like all great art, this monumental work continues to inspire. As Merwin discussed in an interview, "The Lice was written at a time when I really felt there was no point in writing. I got to the point where I thought the future was so bleak that there was no point in writing anything at all. And so the poems kind of pushed their way upon me. I would be out growing vegetables and walking around the countryside when all of a sudden I find myself writing a poem, and I write it. When the War is Over When the war is over We will be proud of course the air will be Good for breathing at last The water will have been improved the salmon And the silence of heaven will migrate more perfectly The dead will think the living are worth it we will know Who we are And we will all enlist again W.S. Merwin is one of America's greatest poets. His recent books of poems have been honored with a Pulitzer prize, a National Book Award, and the Bobbitt Prize from the Library of Congress. He lives in Hawaii. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

W. S. Merwin: W.S. Merwin served as Poet Laureate of the United States and has received every major literary accolade, including two Pulitzer prizes, most recently for *The Shadow of Sirius* (Copper Canyon) and the National Book Award for *Migration: New and Selected Poems* (Copper Canyon). --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Really strange that there were no reviews, so I figured I would add my 2 cents. This is a book that cemented Merwin's style and initiated themes that continued to evolve in subsequent works--topically elusive, void of punctuation. short lines and short poems, deeply rooted in nature and consciousness, building upon a participation mystique; this is one of the most significant and influential early deep-imagistic works. "Now all my teachers are dead except silence". The Lice first came out in the midst of Viet Nam and ecological crises, and re-issue at present regrettably is all too apt. "When the war is over--we will be proud of course the air will be--Good for breathing at last..." I imagine these poems as prayers from the time of Neolithic hunters perhaps 30,000 years ago trying to understand an unknown and essentially unknowable animistic universe. One approach would be the Lascaux caves. These poems also could be their responses, shared around a guttering evening fire .perhaps in that same cave.

This book is not much like other volumes that Merwin has published. That says something about the time in which it was written and about the young man who wrote it. The poems come across as explosions of blunt, barely worked-out realizations. They seem incomplete and yet click with us, awakening similar visceral memories in ourselves. Though their timeless statements about war and capitalism may not retain full effect in years to come, these pieces will always convey the fresh way a young poet expresses the life he is experiencing.

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