



Real Sofistikashun: Essays on Poetry and Craft

Tony Hoagland

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The anticipated first collection of essays by celebrated poet Tony Hoagland, author of *What Narcissism Means to Me*

Meanness, the very thing that is unforgivable in human social life, in poetry is thrilling and valuable. Why? Because the willingness to be offensive sets free the ruthless observer in all of us, the spiteful perceptive angel who sees and tells, unimpeded by nicety or second thoughts. There is truth-telling, and more, in meanness. ?from "Negative Capability: How to Talk Mean and Influence People"

Tony Hoagland has won The Poetry Foundation's Mark Twain Award, recognizing a poet's contribution to humor in American poetry, and also the Folger Shakespeare Library's O. B. Hardison Jr. Poetry Prize, the only major award that honors a poet's excellence in teaching. *Real Sofistikashun*, from the title onward, uses Hoagland's signature abilities to entertain and instruct as he forages through central questions about how poems behave and how they are made.

In these taut, illuminating essays, Hoagland explores aspects of poetic craft?metaphor, tone, rhetorical and compositional strategies?with the vigorous, conversational style less of the scholar than of the serious enthusiast and practitioner. *Real Sofistikashun* is an exciting, humorous, and provocative collection of essays, as pleasurable a book as it is useful.

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