



Collected Earlier Poems

Anthony Hecht

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THE VENETIAN VESPERS (1979)

“In its clear-eyed mercy toward human weakness, Anthony Hecht’s poetry goes from strength to strength. *The Venetian Vespers* is at once an intense corroboration and an ample extension of his subtle, supple talents. Nothing humane is alien to him... There is a handful of short poems that are fostered alike by beauty and fear. But it is the four long poems that confirm Hecht as a poet of the widest apprehensions and comprehension, and this without the gigantism that so haunts American poetic ambition.”

—Christopher Ricks, *The New York Times Book Review*

MILLIONS OF STRANGE SHADOWS (1977)

“The high artistry of Anthony Hecht has been to nurture his own gift, and to work at it with the deliberateness and steadiness that it deserved from him... Emotional intensity and formal power were combined in Hecht from his beginnings... The thirty poems in *Millions of Strange Shadows* are all fully written, but several truly are the best he has published and are very likely to endure. The very best is ‘Green: An Epistle,’ which is a lesson in profound, controlled subjectivity and self-revelation, an exact antithesis to the opaque squalors of ‘confessional’ poets. Almost equally remarkable is ‘Coming Home,’ in which the poet John Clare receives a deeper interpretation than any critic has afforded him...”

—Harold Bloom, *The New Republic*

THE HARD HOURS (1968)

“Anthony Hecht’s first volume of poems, *A Summoning of Stones*, established him as one of the most accomplished of his extremely accomplished generation. His work was remarkable enough for its classical poise and elegance, but it also had a weight which set it apart. Since then his poetry has come clear in a direction nobody could have predicted... He did the most difficult thing of all: this most fastidious and elegant of poets shed every artifice and began to write with absolute raw simplicity and directness. Only a poet with an immense burden of something to say ever dreams of taking this course, and only an inspired artist can bring it off. The result here has been some of the most powerful and unforgettable poems at present being written in America,”

—Ted Hughes

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