



# Poetry Los Angeles: Reading the Essential Poems of the City

*Laurence Goldstein*

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Is there such a thing as Los Angeles poetry? How do we assess a poem about a city as elusive of identity as Los Angeles? What features do poems about this unique urban landscape of diverse peoples and terrains have in common? *Poetry Los Angeles* is the first book to gather and analyze poems about sites as different as Hollywood, Santa Monica and Venice beaches, the freeways, downtown, South Central and East L.A. Laurence Goldstein presents original commentary on six decades of poets who have contributed to the iconography and poetics of Los Angeles literature, including Elizabeth Alexander, Jimmy Santiago Baca, Dorothy Barresi, Victoria Chang, Wanda Coleman, Dana Gioia, Joy Harjo, James Harms, Robert Hass, Eloise Klein Healy, Garrett Hongo, Suzanne Lummis, Paul Monette, Harryette Mullen, Carol Muske-Dukes, Frederick Seidel, Gary Soto, Timothy Steele, Diane Wakoski, Derek Walcott, and Charles Harper Webb. Forty poems are reproduced in their entirety.

One chapter is devoted to Charles Bukowski, the celebrity face of the city's poetry. Other chapters discuss the ways that poets explore "Interiors" and "Exteriors" throughout the cityscape. Goldstein also provides ample connections to the novels, films, art, and politics of Southern California. In clear prose, *Poetry Los Angeles* examines the strategies by which poets make significant places meaningful and memorable to readers of every region of the U.S. and elsewhere.

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