



Reconnaissance: Poems

By Carl Phillips

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Reconnaissance: Poems By Carl Phillips

A powerful, inventive collection from one of America's most respected poets

*There's
a trembling inside the both of us,
there's a trembling, inside us both.*

The territory of *Reconnaissance* is one where morals threaten to become merely "what the light falls through," "suffering [seems] in fact for nothing," and "all we do is maybe all we can do." In the face of this, Carl Phillips, reconsidering and unraveling what we think we know, maps out the contours of a world in revision, where truth lies captured at one moment and at the next goes free, transformed. These are poems of searing beauty, lit by hope and shadowed by it, from a poet whose work "reinstates the possibility of finding meaning in a world that is forever ready to revoke the sources of meaning in our lives" (Jonathan Farmer, *Slate*).

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Editorial Review

Review

Praise for *Reconnaissance*

"Carl Phillips creates smooth currents of language that begin in one place, subtly shift direction and then shift again . . . The sounds and rhythms of these poems are gorgeous, and Phillips, whose awards include the Los Angeles Times Book Prize, isn't afraid to ask unsettling questions." ?Elizabeth Lund, *The Washington Post*

"[Phillips's] poems are driven by the desire to transform truth into beauty. Yet they are scrupulous in their acknowledgement that the truth has, more often than not, been left behind . . . He makes extraordinary beauty true by acknowledging that the beauty we long for is often unreal." ?Jonathan Farmer, *Slate*

"Phillips's poems wander precisely through the speaker's epistemology. And this is characteristic of Phillips's form: a precise wandering in which every line break, stanza, and punctuation mark offers a deliberate and unfamiliar veering. . . Phillips's patient, mellow insights are a signature of his poetry, as is his origami syntax. The challenge of the language and form is woven by a pristine clarity of thought?a highly organized confusion, an intense awareness of one's conceptual vertigo. This vertigo is amplified by Phillips's dancing around the sonnet, often fluctuating between thirteen and fifteen lines, with varying stanza shape and line length. . . Phillips tethers these moments of reflection for us with elegant threads of language, delicate braids of knowing, comfortable that they will most likely disintegrate, snap, or, perhaps, suddenly turn to smoke or light." ?Wesley Rothman, *Harvard Review*

"What we're being asked to jettison in *Reconnaissance* is that cool innocence and, in its place, Phillips is daring us?through his own extravagant reckoning?to contend with those wild forces galloping in us, those we try to hold on and ride and those we are?sometimes beautifully?trampled by." ?Scout

"One of the country's most talented poets and sentence-weavers." ?Saeed Jones, *Advocate*

"A characteristically bold and beautiful collection from this brilliant lyricist." ?*Booklist*

"Phillips, who has always wrestled gracefully with human longing, confronted solitude in his most recent collection, *Silverchest*, an LJ Best Poetry Book. Now he confronts a world that's constantly redefining itself, faster and faster, a world where the truth can't be neatly pinned. Never mind that 'There's a trembling inside the both of us, there's a trembling, inside us both,' these are still finally poems alight with hope." ?Barbara Hoffert, *Library Journal*

Praise for Carl Phillips

"I have a candidate for the author of the most interesting contemporary English sentences, and he is not primarily a prose writer: the American poet Carl Phillips . . . Like Emily Dickinson, Phillips is always taking in the minute metamorphoses of his surroundings (Dickinson's 'Slant of light, / Winter Afternoons') as a way of measuring his own 'internal difference, / Where the Meanings, are.' . . . But he is not a loner; he is, instead, a poet of erotic life as scored for solo contemplation." ?Dan Chiasson, *The New Yorker*

About the Author

Carl Phillips is the author of twelve books of poetry, including *Silverchest*, a finalist for the International Griffin Prize, and *Double Shadow*, winner of the Los Angeles Times Book Prize. His most recent book of prose is *The Art of Daring: Risk, Restlessness, Imagination*. Phillips teaches at Washington University in St. Louis.

Users Review

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John Harris:

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Billy Stinson:

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