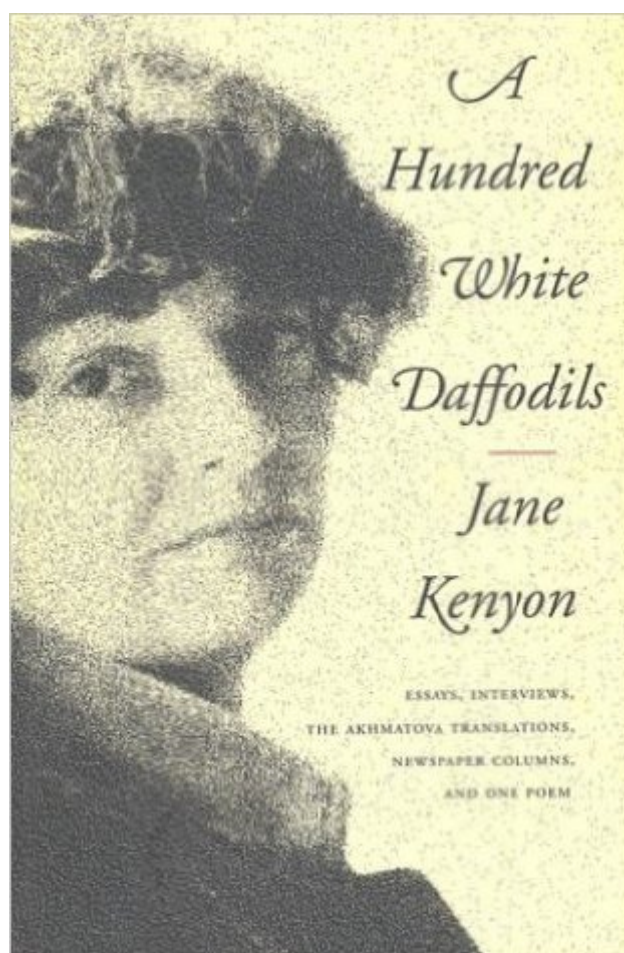


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A Hundred White Daffodils: Essays, Interviews, The Akhmatova Translations, Newspaper Columns, And One Poem



Synopsis

"There is something in me that will not be snuffed out," Jane Kenyon told Bill Moyers in an interview. And there is no better proof of that than the overwhelming response her poetry generates. Kenyon's last collection, *Otherwise: New & Selected Poems*, remains a phenomenon: a best-seller that testifies to the impact Kenyon has had on the poetic landscape. *A Hundred White Daffodils* is a companion volume that sheds illumination on a poet, and a woman, of great presence. It offers glimpses into a life cut too short and traces the influences that created Kenyon's poetic voice. The book includes Kenyon's translations of the great Russian poet Anna Akhmatova, and insights into how Kenyon chose her as a muse. It presents a variety of Kenyon's prose pieces about the writing life, her spiritual life, her country community, her gardens-- themes that readers will well remember from her poems. Transcripts of interviews provide further understanding as Kenyon faces her struggle with depression and the losses wrought by illness. Finally, there is an unfinished, visionary poem that makes one wonder what might have been if Kenyon had been given the chance to create more poetry. Including an introduction by Kenyon's husband and fellow poet, Donald Hall, and a bibliography of her publications, *A Hundred White Daffodils* is a gift to all those devoted to Kenyon's poetry.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I originally picked this book up for the Akhmatova translations, but I found the interviews highly informative. Though I am not a published poet (in spite of describing myself as the most spaced out

poet on the planet in a few reviews), I have been to Ann Arbor, Michigan and New Hampshire, and I was surprised with how similar some of our experiences have been. I have been to a writing workshop, so it was possible for me to follow the process by which she has shared and refined poems before attempting to have them published. I have also been to church and taken part in discussions in that context, and was not surprised that Jane Kenyon never found the courage to submit the final poem in the book, "Woman, Why Are You Weeping?" to that process. People don't usually talk about 'apathy and bafflement' while "waiting/ for the bread and wine of Holy Communion" after having been to India. (pp. 205-09). It would be awful for me to joke about the contents of this book, but I think I found a joke by Jane Kenyon in the article, "Poetry and the Mail," originally published in "The Concord Monitor," 16 August 1993. "All poets share one thing, however--a daily dependence on the mail. 'It is joy, and it is pain,' as the great Russian poet Anna Akhmatova once said, though not about the mail." (p. 128). The poem itself, "Like a white stone in a deep well," (p. 16) is included in this book. Memory is mentioned in the second line, and in the final line of the poem, and must be what Anna Akhmatova was thinking about, or about "how the gods turned people/ into things, not killing their consciousness." (p. 16) Most of the poems by Kenyon in this book show up in the Interview with Bill Moyers (1993).

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