

David Orr

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EDUCATION:

Yale Law School, J.D. 2000

Princeton University, B.A. 1996
Magna cum laude, English.

BOOKS:

Dangerous Household Items (poetry collection). Copper Canyon Press, October 2018.

You, Too, Could Write A Poem: Selected Essays and Reviews. Penguin. February 2017.

The Road Not Taken: Finding America in the Poem Everyone Loves and Almost Everyone Gets Wrong. Penguin Press. August 2015.

The Road Not Taken and Early Poems of Robert Frost (editor). Penguin Classics, August 2015.

Beautiful & Pointless: A Guide to Modern Poetry. HarperCollins, April 2011.

LITERARY ACTIVITIES AND AWARDS:

Poetry columnist for *The New York Times Book Review* (2005-).

National Book Critics Circle prize for excellence in book reviewing (2004).

Juror, The Pulitzer Prize for Poetry (2015).

Nominator, United States Poet Laureate (2011, 2014).

Literature Panel, The MacDowell Colony. (2007-11, October 2017).

Board of Directors, National Book Critics Circle (2006-2009).

Hodder Fellow, Princeton University Council of the Humanities (2006-2007).

Editor's Prize for Reviewing, *Poetry* magazine (2006).

EMPLOYMENT:

Rutgers University

Professor of Poetry and the Practice of Criticism. 2018-

Cornell University

Professor of the Practice, English Department. 2015-2018.

Trachtenberg Rodes & Friedberg (New York, NY)

Litigation Associate, 2006-2012. Major practice area: commercial litigation.
Admitted in New York.

Wollmuth Maher & Deutsch (New York, NY)

Litigation Associate, 2002-06.

Simpson Thacher & Bartlett (New York, NY)

Litigation Associate, 2000-2002.

COVERAGE OF *YOU, TOO, COULD WRITE A POEM*:

- *The New York Times Book Review*, February 10, 2017. (“Orr writes with generous reasonableness and accessibility. He’s also a gifted practitioner of similes . . . But most of all he possesses an apparent and infectious love for his subject, and his passionate expertise makes this book an elucidating joy.”)
- *The Christian Science Monitor*, February 7, 2017. (“*You, Too, Could Write A Poem* is literary criticism at its best . . . throughout this engaging collection, he’s like the smart, provocative guy who is invited to every dinner party because he’s so insightful and often makes people laugh.”)
- *The Washington Post*, interview with Ron Charles, who called the collection “a fantastic, smart and witty book.” April 26, 2017.
- *Library Journal*, February 2017 (starred review). (“This inspiring collection of reviews and essays on the pleasures of poetry . . . is a powerful example of why he is one of our sanest (and therefore most important) voices on this too-often-neglected art.”)
- *Kirkus Reviews*, November 15, 2016. (“Orr says the greatest compliment for any critic ‘is to say that you found yourself thinking of his writing the next time you encountered a good poem.’ He abundantly deserves that same praise.”)
- *Publishers Weekly*, November 7, 2016 (starred review). (“Orr is an exceptional wit and critical talent, with perhaps his most brilliant feat here being how he dissolves some of poetry’s opacity and makes it more accessible (and interesting) to a wider audience.”)

SELECTED COVERAGE OF *THE ROAD NOT TAKEN*:

- Plunkett, Adam. “‘The Road Not Taken’ by David Orr,” *The New York Times Book Review*. (August 20, 2015).

- Gorra, Michael. “Sorry I Could Not Travel Both,” *The Wall Street Journal* (September 4, 2015).
- Brodeur, Michael Andor. “‘The Road Not Taken’ by David Orr,” *The Boston Globe*. (August 15, 2015).
- Marvel, Bill. “Review: ‘The Road Not Taken: Finding America in the Poem Everyone Loves and Almost Everyone Gets Wrong,’ by David Orr,” *The Dallas Morning News* (August 14, 2015).
- Lynch, Stephen. “The Famous Robert Frost Poem We’ve Read Wrong Forever,” *The New York Post* (August 16, 2015).
- Domestico, Anthony. “‘The Road Not Taken’ Reveals the Unexpected in Frost’s Most Famous Poem,” *The Christian Science Monitor* (August 17, 2015). Also one of the publication’s “10 Best Books of August” (August 4, 2015).
- “The 100th Anniversary of Robert Frost’s Poem, ‘The Road Not Taken,’” The Diane Rehm Show (August 20, 2015).
- “What We’ve Gotten Wrong About This Robert Frost Classic.” Interview with Jeffrey Brown of PBS NewsHour. (August 18, 2015).

SELECTED COVERAGE OF *BEAUTIFUL & POINTLESS*:

- *Chicago Tribune*, Best Books of 2011 (December 16, 2011).
- Kirby, David. “How To Read Poetry Today,” *The New York Times Book Review* (April 8, 2011).
- Teicher, Craig Morgan. “The Secrets of Poetryland,” *Slate* (April 14, 2011).
- Mallon, Helen. “Sympathy, Celebration for the Poet,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (August 7, 2011).
- Meis, Morgan. “Poetry: A Defense? The Premier Poetry Critic Takes a Step Back,” *The Smart Set* (April 25, 2011).
- Pritchard, W.S. “Poetryland,” *Commonweal* magazine (September 9, 2011).
- “A Poetry Critic Asks: Why Bother?” NPR’s *All Things Considered* (April 9, 2011).
- “Demystifying Poetry.” NPR’s *On Point with Tom Ashbrook* (April 22, 2011).
- “Modern Poetry Made Less Terrifying.” Interview with Laura Miller, *Salon.com* (April 5, 2011).
- D’Addario, Daniel. “Spring Arts Preview: Top Ten Books,” *The New York Observer* (March 8, 2011).
- Peters, Susan L. *Library Journal* (May 1, 2011).
- *Publishers Weekly*. Starred review and Pick of the Week (March 28, 2011).

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS (full list upon request):

The New York Times Book Review:

- “The Best Poetry of 2017.” December 22, 2017.
- “When Did Poetry Speak to Us? When We Were Very Young.” December 1, 2017

- “John Ashbery, the Gift of Quiet Moments.” September 5, 2017. [This piece was a post-obituary critical assessment of Ashbery.]
- “John Ashbery Dies; Revered Poet Crafted One-of-a-Kind Voice.” September 8, 2017. [This was the Times obituary for Ashbery, which I wrote prior to the assessment above.]
- “What Does a Poet Know About War?” August 2, 2017.
- “After Dylan’s Nobel, What Makes a Poet a Poet?” March 24, 2017.
- “Why Is a Poet’s First Collection So Important?” February 3, 2017.
- “The Best Poetry of 2016.” December 22, 2016.
- “Do People Hate Poetry? According to Ben Lerner, Yes.” Aug. 28, 2016.
- “Freely Rhymed: ‘All the Poems of Stevie Smith.’” April 24, 2016.
- “‘Turning Into Dwelling’ by Christopher Gilbert.” December 27, 2015.
- “Rare or Well-Done” (Frank Stanford and Devin Johnston). July 19, 2015.
- “James Franco, Poet.” July 20, 2014.
- “Points of Entry” (Robert Pinsky’s *Singing School*). November 22, 2013.
- “Free Range” (Louis MacNeice’s *Collected Poems*). August 30, 2013.
- “Louise Glück’s Metamorphoses.” January 18, 2013.
- “Daily Devotions” (Jack Gilbert’s *Collected Poems*). October 26, 2012.
- “Flying on in the Reflected Sky” (the poetry of Nabokov). July 20, 2012.
- “Versions” (on translations of Tomas Tranströmer). March 9, 2012.
- “The Rediscovery of Luis de Góngora.” December 9, 2011.
- “Elements of Style” (Matthew Zapruder’s *Come On All You Ghosts* and Rachel Wetzsteon’s *Silver Roses*). April 24, 2011.
- “O! Poetry” (on *Oprah Magazine*’s poetry issue). March 27, 2011.
- “A Life in Verse” (Maxine Hong Kingston’s *I Love a Broad Margin to My Life*). March 13, 2011.
- “The Formalist” (Richard Wilbur’s *Anterooms*). Jan. 9, 2011.
- “The Age of Citation” (on epigraphs). Sept. 19, 2010.
- “Empathy and Desire” (Robert Hass’s *The Apple Trees at Olema*). May 16, 2010.
- “Rhyme and Unreason” (Nicholson Baker’s *The Anthologist*). Sept. 6, 2009.
- “Too Close to Touch” (Thom Gunn’s *Selected Poems*). July 12, 2009.
- “The Edge of Night” (Frederick Seidel’s *Collected Poems*). May 24, 2009.
- “The Great(ness) Game” (essay). February 22, 2009.
- “Love, Your Ted” (*Letters of Ted Hughes*, ed. Christopher Reid). Nov. 16, 2008.
- “Yet Once More, A Laurel Not Bestowed” (American poetry’s Nobel drought). Oct. 12, 2008.
- “The Roustabout” (Clive James’s *Opal Sunset: Selected Poems*). Sept. 28, 2008.
- “Solder Boy” (Frances Richey’s *The Warrior*). July 20, 2008.
- “Vendler’s Yeats” (Helen Vendler’s *Our Secret Discipline: Yeats and Lyric Form*). May 11, 2008.
- “In Memoriam” (Mary Jo Bang’s *Elegy*). March 30, 2008.

- “Dream Logic” (Matthea Harvey’s *Modern Life*). Feb. 17, 2008.
- “Translating Zbigniew Herbert” (Zbigniew Herbert’s *Collected Poems*). July 29, 2007.
- “Annals of Poetry” (poetry and *The New Yorker*). March 11, 2007.
- “Frost on the Edge” (*The Notebooks of Robert Frost*). Feb. 4, 2007.
- “Stephen Fry’s School of Verse” (Stephen Fry’s *The Ode Less Traveled*). Oct. 1, 2006.
- “A Toast to the Happy Couplet” (on wedding poetry). June 4, 2006.
- “Elizabeth Bishop’s Rough Gems” (Elizabeth Bishop’s *Edgar Allan Poe & the Juke-Box*). April 2, 2006.
- “Charming Billy” (Billy Collins’s *The Trouble with Poetry*). Jan. 8, 2006.
- “Hit Parade” (Garrison Keillor vs. August Kleinzahler). Nov. 13, 2005.
- “Jorie Graham, Superstar” (Jorie Graham’s *Overlord*). April 24, 2005.
- “You, Too, Could Write a Poem” (*The Best American Poetry 2004*). Nov. 21, 2004.
- “The Ironist of Nostalgia” (Donald Justice’s *Collected Poems*). Aug. 29, 2004.
- “What’s Not a Poem Has Been Discarded” (Marie Ponsot’s *Springing: New and Selected Poems*). April 21, 2002.

Poetry magazine:

- “Public Poetry?” (Thomas Sayers Ellis’s *Skin, Inc.*, Timothy Donnelly’s *The Cloud Corporation*, C.D. Wright’s *One with Others*, and Eleanor Wilner’s *Tourist in Hell*). April 2011.
- “Poetry And, Of and About” (essay on *Poetry of the Law: From Chaucer to the Present*, eds. David Kader and Michael Stanford). February 2011.
- “The Politics of Poetry” (essay). July – Aug 2008.
- “Beach Reading” (essay). July – Aug. 2007.
- “Briefs” (essay). July – Aug. 2006.
- “Eight Takes” (*Yvor Winters: Selected Poems, John Greenleaf Whittier: Selected Poems, American Wits: An Anthology of Light Verse, Amy Lowell: Selected Poems, Kenneth Fearing: Selected Poems, Muriel Rukeyser: Selected Poems, Karl Shapiro: Selected Poems, John Berryman: Selected Poems*). Dec. 2005.
- “Eight Takes” (Susan Stewart’s *Columbarium*, Heather McHugh’s *Eyeshot*, David Biespiel’s *Wild Civility*, Kim Addonizio’s *What Is This Thing Called Love*, Robert Wrigley’s *Lives of the Animals*, Talvikki Ansel’s *Jetty & Other Poems*, Charlie Smith’s *Women of America*). Aug. 2004.
- “Short Reviews” (Nick Flynn’s *Blind Huber*, Connie Wanek’s *Hartley Field*, C.D. Wright’s *Steal Away: New and Selected Poems*, Alfred Corn’s *Contradictions*, Sidney Wade’s *Celestial Bodies*). June 2003.
- “Short Reviews” (Thom Gunn’s *Boss Cupid*, Herbert Morris’s *What Was Lost*, Gerald Stern’s *Last Blue*, Alice Friman’s *Zoo*). March 2001.
- “Short Reviews” (Adrienne Rich’s *Midnight Salvage*, Zbigniew Herbert’s *Elegy for the Departure*, Daniela Crăsnaru’s *Sea Level Zero*, Linda Gregg’s *Things and Flesh*). Aug. 2000.

- “The Poetry of Populism” (Raymond Carver’s *All of Us: The Collected Poems*, Michael Chitwood’s *The Weave Room*, Greg Miller’s *Iron Wheel*).

Miscellaneous publications:

- Poems in *The New Yorker*, *Poetry* magazine, *The Yale Review*, among other publications.
- “How Far Can You Press a Poet?” (on Stevie Smith) in *The Believer*, April 2005. Reprinted in *Read Hard: Five Years of Great Writing from The Believer* (McSweeney’s, July 2009).
- “American Poetry: An Allegory.” *Virginia Quarterly Review*, Spring 2012.
- Various essays for NPR Books, 2011 – present.
- Essay contribution to *Should I Go to Grad School?*, eds. Loudis and Blagojević (Bloomsbury 2014). (“A wide range of intellectuals and creative types ... share their stories about going to grad school or avoiding it...”).
- Introduction to *The McSweeneys Book of Poets Picking Poets*. (McSweeney’s, April 2007).
- Short essay in *The Top Ten: Writers Pick Their Favorite Books*, ed. J. Peder Zane. Norton, Jan. 2007.

SELECTED READINGS, LECTURES AND PANELS:

- “Robert Frost and ‘The Road Not Taken.’” The Pingry School, April 7, 2017.
- “When Road Diverge: Robert Frost and Belief in the Future” (with Lesley Lee Francis, Robert B. Hass and Donald Sheehy). Jefferson Educational Society’s Global Summit Speaker Series, November 10, 2016.
- “Salon with David Orr” (on Donald Justice). O, Miami Festival, August 21, 2016.
- A.K. Smith Visiting Scholars Lecture at Trinity College on Robert Frost and “The Road Not Taken,” April 26, 2016.
- “David Orr on Robert Frost.” The 92nd Street Y, December 13, 2015.
- “Criticism NOW: Literary and Cultural Critics Report from the Front” (with Eric Banks, Jeff Dolven, Maureen McLane, Michael H. Miller and Lizzie Skurnick). Sponsored by New York University’s Futures of Literary Studies Colloquium, April 19, 2011.
- “Poetry and the Public with David Orr” (with Sam Tanenhaus, Dwight Garner, Laura Miller, Tree Swenson and Robyn Creswell). Co-sponsored by Housing Works and the National Book Foundation, April 15, 2011.
- “Critical Contexts: Roundtable on Contemporary Poetry” (with Srikanth Reddy and Rebecca Wolff). Co-sponsored by Harvard University and the Poetry Society of America, March 11, 2010.
- “Laugh Lines: Humor and the Art of Writing Poetry” (with Billy Collins, Kimiko Hahn, Wayne Koestenbaum, Donna Masini, Roger Sedarat and Gregory Pardlo). Sponsored by The New York Times Knowledge Network.

- Lecture, Princeton Club of New York. Co-sponsored by the Princeton Club of New York and the Princeton University Friends of the Library, Nov. 28, 2007.
- “Writers, Editors and Literary Magazines, 1947-2007: A Conversation in Honor of the Hudson Review” (with Anthony Grafton, Sean Wilentz, Michael Wood, William Pritchard, Emily Grosholz, Paula Deitz and Lea Carpenter). Sponsored by Princeton University, Nov. 3, 2007.
- “Poets in Conversation” (with James Richardson). Sponsored by the Princeton University Graduate Contemporary Poetry Colloquium, Feb. 27, 2007.
- “An Appreciation of Poet Elizabeth Bishop” (with Alice Quinn and Sam Tanenhaus). *The Charlie Rose Show*, April 28, 2006.
- “Crossing the DMZ: Critics Who Write Poetry” (with Stephen Burt, Adam Kirsch and Meghan O’Rourke). Sponsored by the National Book Critics Circle, April 10, 2006.