Darwin’s Bards
British and American Poetry in the Age of Evolution

John Holmes

The first comprehensive study of how poets have responded to the ideas of Charles Darwin in over fifty years

_Darwin’s Bards_ is the first comprehensive study of how poets have responded to the theory of evolution in over fifty years. John Holmes argues that poetry can have a profound impact on how we think and feel about the Darwinian condition. What does Darwinism tell us about the nature of God? What is our own place in the Darwinian universe, and our ecological role here on earth? How does our kinship with other animals affect how we see them and ourselves?

Holmes explores how some of the most perceptive and powerful poets in Britain and America have grappled with these questions over the last hundred-and-fifty years, from Alfred Tennyson and Robert Browning, through Thomas Hardy and Robert Frost, to Ted Hughes, Thom Gunn, Pattiann Rogers and Edwin Morgan. By including over fifty complete poems and substantial extracts from several more, Holmes give his readers the chance to experience for themselves too what it can mean to live in a Darwinian world. Written in an engaging style, for scientists, philosophers and ecologists, as well as poets, scholars and students of literature, _Darwin’s Bards_ is a timely intervention into the heated debates over Darwin’s legacy for religion, ecology and the arts.

October 2013
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