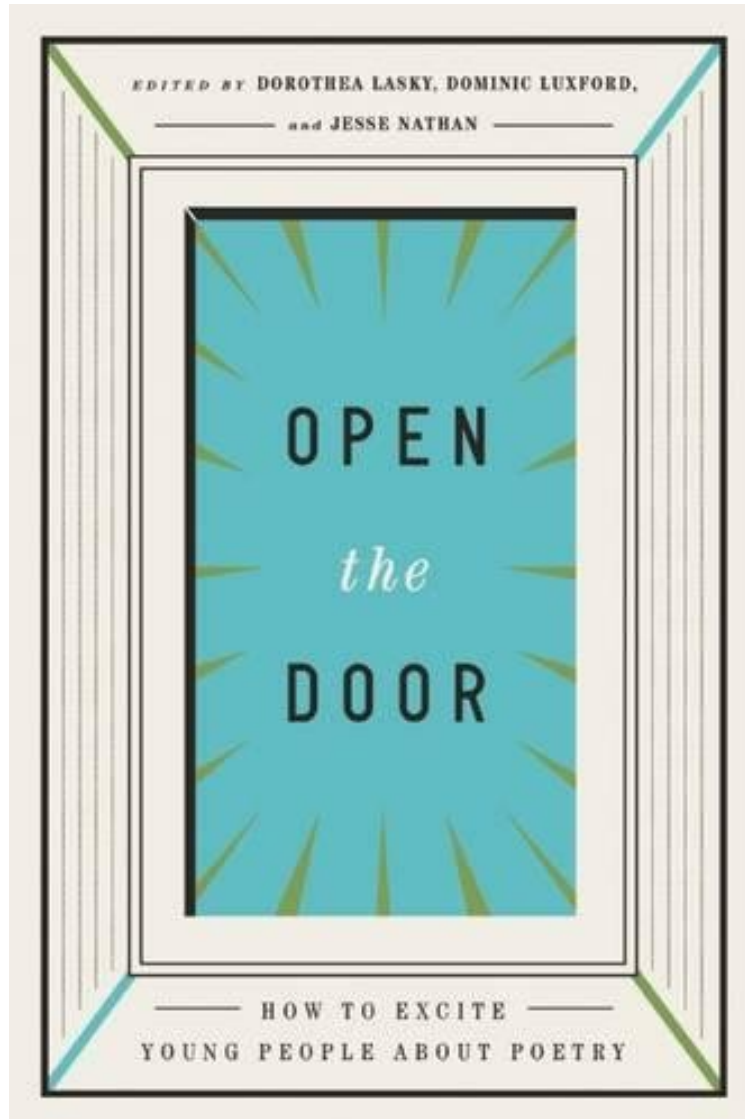


(Online library) Open the Door: How to Excite Young People about Poetry

Open the Door: How to Excite Young People about Poetry

From Brand: McSweeney's
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From Brand: McSweeney's : Open the Door: How to Excite Young People about Poetry before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Open the Door: How to Excite Young People about Poetry:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A text for sharing poetry with children and teens By Liviana "How wonderful the struggle with language is." - Theodore Roethke April, as you may know, is National Poetry Month. You might follow Savvy Verse Wit's blog tour and keep an eye out for Clear Eyes, Full Shelves Novel in Verse Week

starting April 21. This month two books are being released in a partnership between McSweeney's Books and The Poetry Foundation. *OPEN THE DOOR: How to Excite Young People about Poetry* is the one that first caught my eye. The blurb promises that it will be "useful for first-time and veteran teachers, as well as parents, babysitters, MFAs with no job, and anyone else with an interest in poetry's place in the lives of our younger citizens." I count myself in a few of those groups and decided to give it a chance. *OPEN THE DOOR* is divided into three sections: essays, roundtable discussion, and lesson plans. The essays are a mix of new and reprinted material about experiences working with children focusing on what worked and what didn't. This section comes first and is the best place to start - it's very motivating. One idea that came up more than once and made quite a bit of sense to me is to not force children to focus on spelling or grammar when writing poetry. Get them to write and then help them to revise after. Focusing too much on rules limits them. Plus, there's value in revision. The second section, the roundtable discussion, is a question and answer session with several people working in nonprofits providing poetry programs for children and teens. The advice within will be most useful for people looking to start poetry programs, but I found it surprisingly interesting. I particularly liked one answer that refutes *OPEN THE DOOR*'s subtitle: I'm not interested in exciting students about poetry so much as I am in giving them experiences of genuine substance and in helping them investigate the emotional turmoil of adolescence, which will allow them to mature into adults whose inner lives are rich enough to endure difficulties, challenges, and even tragedies . . . They have plenty of diversions in their lives . . . They have enough excitement . . . What they need is something that helps them not to turn away, but rather to turn toward the conflicts they face in their everyday lives. This is what art, what poetry, does. - 237, ARC, Amy Swauger

The third section is self explanatory. The lesson plans included are short but sweet. The majority provide a reading and a writing portion, although some suggest pieces of music or such instead of readings. I think this section is of more use to teachers than the layman, although some guardians who want to bring poetry to their kids might prefer such clear guides. All in all I think that *OPEN THE DOOR* will appeal most to teachers, but I don't think the blurb is wrong. There is wide appeal here. *OPEN THE DOOR* presents a wide range of perspectives. Most of the contributors are American, but not all. They are women and men of many sexualities, races, and social classes. It's nice to hear a range of voices in a discussion of how to empower others to use their voice. I also like that *OPEN THE DOOR* provides clear answers to what to do next. There are suggestions of other books and poets to read and organizations to investigate in addition to the exercises provided within the pages. It's a terrific starting point for anyone who wants to share poetry with the young. I think *OPEN THE DOOR* does a wonderful job of accomplishing its goals.

This one-of-a-kind mixture of essays, interviews, and lesson plans gathers the best thinking about how we can impart the value and joy of poetry to kids. The essays in the first section from Matthea Harvey, Ron Padgett, William Stafford, Eileen Myles, Kenneth Koch, Theodore Roethke, and many others illuminate the importance of poetry to a well-rounded education, in and out of traditional classroom settings. The next section is a roundtable conversation among a handful of creative men and women who've helped set up or run poetry education centers around the United States. In the book's final segment, award-winning poets (Matthew Zapruder, Yusef Komunyakaa, many others) offer an array of brilliant lesson plans for people teaching poetry to kids of all ages. *Open the Door* will be useful for first-time and veteran teachers, as well as parents, babysitters, MFAs with no job, and anyone else with an interest in poetry's place in the lives of our younger citizens.

From Booklist*Starred* The classroom is not the only, nor the best, venue for encouraging children and young adults to revel in reading and writing poetry. McSweeney's and the Poetry Foundation have teamed up to create this unique and inspiring collection of essays, a roundtable discussion with 18 leaders of literary organizations (including Dave Eggers of *826* and Mimi Herman of *Poetry Out Loud*), and smart and lively lesson plans for poets, educators, librarians, and other enthusiasts who are thinking about or embarking on creating community, excitement, joy, and learning around poetry for younger audiences. As poet Kenneth Koch (1925-2002), this collection's guiding light, discovered, Children have a natural talent for writing poetry, so the instructor's task is to help them get tuned into their own strong feelings, to their spontaneity, their sensitivity, and their carefree inventiveness. All these factors are addressed and cultivated in the energetically instructive and imaginative techniques and wisdom shared by 40 teaching poets, including Yusef Komunyakaa, Eileen Myles, Theodore Roethke, and Jimmy Santiago Baca. When asked about the benefits of teaching poetry to children, one roundtable participant, Megan McNamer, responded, Children have a chance to flourish spiritually, socially, and intellectually. Teaching poetry is one important way to help children become human beings who are fully awake to the world. --Donna Seaman "Worried you don't know how to teach poetry? Frustrated that your students groan at the sight of a poem? *Open the Door* will change all that. The writers not only give teachers permission to approach the teaching of poetry through a fresh portal; they also provide clear directions for finding that elusive door in the wall. This is a GPS for both the poetically challenged and anyone in search of new word horizons." --Carol Jago, past president, National Council of Teachers of English "An invaluable resource." Publishers Weekly (Starred review)