



# Twenty Poems That Could Save America and Other Essays

*Tony Hoagland*

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A fearless, wide-ranging book on the state of poetry and American literary culture by Tony Hoagland, the author of *What Narcissism Means to Me*

*Live American poetry is absent from our public schools. The teaching of poetry languishes, and that region of youthful neurological terrain capable of being ignited only by poetry is largely dark, unpopulated, and silent, like a classroom whose shades are drawn. This is more than a shame, for poetry is our common treasure-house, and we need its vitality, its respect for the subconscious, its willingness to entertain ambiguity, its plaintive truth-telling, and its imaginative exhibitions of linguistic freedom, which confront the general culture's more grotesque manipulations. We need the emotional training sessions poetry conducts us through. We need its previews of coming attractions: heartbreak, survival, failure, endurance, understanding, more heartbreak.*

*?from "Twenty Poems That Could Save America"*

*Twenty Poems That Could Save America* presents insightful essays on the craft of poetry and a bold conversation about the role of poetry in contemporary culture. Essays on the "vertigo" effects of new poetry give way to appraisals of Robert Bly, Sharon Olds, and Dean Young. At the heart of this book is an honesty and curiosity about the ways poetry can influence America at both the private and public levels. Tony Hoagland is already one of this country's most provocative poets, and this book confirms his role as a restless and perceptive literary and cultural critic.

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