



A Bernadette Mayer Reader

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“What a clear, insistent health there is here—as if the so-called world were seriously the point, which it is, and we could actually live in it, which we do. Truly this is the best *How To* book I’ve read in years. Bernadette Mayer makes a various world of real people in real times and places, a fact of love and loving use. She has impeccable insight and humor. She is a consummate poet no matter what’s for supper or who eats it. Would that all genius were as generous.” —Robert Creeley

A Bernadette Mayer Reader Details

Date : Published May 17th 1992 by New Directions (first published May 1992)

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Author : Bernadette Mayer

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Alex Garrison says

Thr prose work doesn't really interest me but the 'sonnets' knock me out. This collection is effective in that it makes me completely want more of her work - a sufficient introduction to an apparently brilliant woman. I found her through 'Eve of Easter', which is great, but it's 'Failures in Infinitives' and of course 'You jerk you didn't call me up' that have changed me deeply. The voice is crushingly singular and true; Mayer is exactly the poet I wish to be.

Raven Lucero says

I liked the second half better. But like it's all pretty good. Just confusing at times. But isn't that why we like our post-modernist poets?

3.75/5 stars

C. Varn says

Outside of Barbara Guest, Bernadette Mayer is other major female voice in the New York School. Whereas Guest poems are arresting and unexpected but very cerebral, Mayer's work has a more earthly intelligence paired with a manic humor. Her poems, however, are less painterly or lyric than Guest's. Indeed, she is defined by play: word play, image play, play in sexuality. Her sonnets pair formality with broken syntax, her lyrics often pair humor with feminine swagger. Mayer's juxtapositions often end with amazing results. This includes examples and excerpts from her early work, including some hard to fine longer poetic works. This is a great introduction to early Bernadette Mayer.

Pete says

i came across "You jerk you didn't call me up" (the one that lovingly invokes cobra commander) last month and thought i needed to immediately know more about the consciousness that created it but i have to say, this is not my bag. i pride myself on having a strange bag that holds many different shapes of objects but bernadette mayer, apart from the one sonnet that involves cobra commander, does not go in my bag. at some point in time i can see how this might have felt bold and grabbed people by the eyelashes but to me it reads like high-toned subtweets. there was a weird moment in time where printing something jagged and spiky on paper felt like a valid and importnat thing but now it just feels like boring yelling? let's not draw too many conclusions

Joe says

Some of the prose excerpts are bound to feel unsatisfying but the brief notes on the method behind them-- "Memory is a journal of the Month of July 1971 based on notes and writings, and a series of 1,116 slides..." "Studying Hunger consists of two lectures culled from the 400-page Studying Hunger Journals, an experiment in recording states of consciousness" points to the range of BM, from translations of Catullus to what Joey A sees as proto conceptualist transcription projects. Particularly interested in the passage in from Memory which nests a smaller experiment within this larger one: "Takes as the stimulus a scrap of brightly colored paper about, say, the size of a penny & make a tiny pencil mark..." And a lot of the other poems are just funny, righteous, and wise.

C.A. says

One of those CLASSIC selections that makes you want to read EVERYTHING the poet has written! Contains some of my favorite poems BY ANY POET, including, "First turn to me...", "Counterhatch," "It Moves Across," and her BRILLIANT sonnet, "You jerk you didn't call me up...." Her influence on many celebrated living poets cannot be stressed enough. She's ONE OF OUR BEST!

CAConrad
<http://CAConrad.blogspot.com>

Julia says

Only because of the short length and production values.

Tim Atkins says

There are not enough poems about daughters in the world but here are some.

Poems.

Ellie Botoman says

ugh my 90s poetry mom

Sam Lohmann says

It's all pretty much amazing but the poem I hadn't read before and that blew me away was "Gay Full Story."

Also: "Marie Makes Fun of Me at the Shore," which in its entirety goes:

*Marie says
look tiny red spiders
are walking
across the pools
& just as I am writing down
tiny red
spiders are
walking across the pools
She says Mom I can just see it
in your poem it'll say
tiny red spiders are walking
across the pools*

Laura says

Bernadette Mayer is one of my favorite poets but this volume is not very well put together and it's way too short. Little nibbles and you're still hungry and confused about what you ate. Better read after you've read her books one by one and then what's the point? There are some poems in the reader that are otherwise out of print, that's the point.

Rebecca says

!!!!!!
