



Double Shadow: Poems

Carl Phillips

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A stunning new collection of poems from the author of *Speak Low*

Comparing any human life to “a restless choir” of impulses variously in conflict and at peace with one another, Carl Phillips, in his eleventh book, examines the double shadow that a life casts forth: “now risk, and now / faintheartedness.” In poems that both embody and inhabit this double shadow, risk and faintheartedness prove to have the power equally to rescue us from ourselves and to destroy us. Spare, haunted, and haunting, yet not without hope, *Double Shadow* argues for life as a wilderness through which there’s only the questing forward—with no regrets and no looking back.

Double Shadow: Poems Details

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From Reader Review Double Shadow: Poems for online ebook

Eunice Moral says

I loooooove everything. Literally every poem! I have found a new favorite!!!

Alisha says

Not my favorite book of Carl Phillips' (I've got 5 or 6) but even so, its still a Chuck Norris roundhouse kick to the gut.

"Look at me. Little ocean, getting farther away.
Now I touch at once both everything and nothing. "

Briana says

PIECE. OF. CRAP. I hated this book. It was a waste of my time, but I refused to rate it without reading all of it. The poems are nonsense and gibberish. Practically just random words thrown together...devoid of meaning (at least, to me). Retail for \$23.00. That is a big fat JOKE! UGH. This book sucks. =(It is going in the trash!

Woot!!!!!! I just won this book on Goodreads Giveaways! I can't wait to read it! Thank you for the opportunity to win great books!! <3

Zoë Danielle says

Double Shadow is the eleventh collection of poetry by Carl Phillips, although the first that I have read. The title refers to the duality of life, the double shadow it casts, the contrasting worlds a single moment can create. The collection also deals strongly with the theme of loss and grief. In "Next Stop, Arcadia", Phillips ends with the question, "which is better? It's hard to decide: / the ugliness of weeping, or the tears themselves?", an example of the conflict, both external and internal, present through Double Shadow.

"The Need for Dreaming" begins with the lines:

"As a scar commemorates what happened,
so is memory itself but a scar."

These are the subjects present in Phillips' writing, nothing is quite as it seems, a scar that is not just a scar. Rather, it is an emptiness he "can't stop collecting", "the strewn shells/of spent ammunition where I come

across them;/ carefully, I hold each up toward what's left of the light." The brokenness of humanity comes across again in the poem "Night" where Phillips writes:

"But by then, it was morning again.
We could see what it was to be at last forsaken-
not so much by others, as by what we'd come to
think of as our better selves,"

and later, in the same poem:

"The restless choir
that any human life can be, sometimes, casts forth
all over again its double shadow: now risk, and now
faintheartedness- we're not what
either of us expected,
are we?- each one a form of disembodiment,
without the other."

The line "we're not what/ either of us expected/are we?" reminds the reader how easy it is to become something else. The main theme at the centre of Double Shadow is epitomized in the poem "On Horseback", in which Phillips writes, "At/ once both a thing that blinds and a form of blindness." In "Of The Rippling Surface", Phillips begins:

"The dragonflies are only the first thing. How they're
not what you think, or thought you would."

reminding the reader of yet another thing which we think is something other than what it is. This related to both our emotions and physical objects which we imbue with our own feelings. Our perception of what something is and what it actually may stand in stark contrast to each other, but neither one is false. In "My Bluest Shirt", Phillips ends with the line "Now I touch at once both everything and nothing." which seems to be what he has attempted with this collection. The poems in Double Shadow are fragile pieces, verging on fragments at times. The writing is sparse but haunting, and when it succeeds it leaves the reader in precarious position, doubting if what we thought was one thing was in fact something else.

Kate says

This is essential reading for anyone over the age of 35 — and/or for anyone who has grappled with true loss, had his/her face rubbed in mortality, or lost sleep/weight/friends over the question of cap-W why. These poems are urgent; they are precise and beautiful in their wrestling with the multilayered mess of existing.

*"...I think
to be useless doesn't have to mean
not somehow mattering..."*

Chances are, I'm going to carry this book in my bag for the next few months.

C says

It breaks my heart a little to give this book three stars because two of my favorite Phillips poems are in this collection ("Cathedral" and "Civilization," both of which I heard him read a few years before this book was published). Those two poems mean so much to me, and yet I can't ignore the fact that a lot of the other poems in this book mean so little. Much of the book felt overwrought and repetitive, and while I know Phillips tends towards certain types of abstractions, images, and syntax, the poems in this collection blurred together in my mind. If Phillips published half as often I would love him twice as much. Which is saying a lot, because I already am so fond of his work.

C says

Read as 3.5 stars. Torn between 3 and 4 stars on this collection.

Some poems (The Heat of the Sun and Immaculate Each Leaf... in particular) really hit me while many of the others just didn't.

I guess I'm saying simply that it felt a bit uneven to me. Some poems felt layered in meaning while others didn't seem to be interested in plumbing those depths.

As my first introduction to the poet, I think I owe it more time in the future.

Kassandra says

Why has no one told me to read this man before? Wow. This book is like a double handful of perfectly cut gems. Normally, I dog-ear poems I like, for repeated reading and study, but for this book, I'd have had to mark every page. Stunningly good.

Danny says

Decided to read some of this year's nominees for the National Book Award in the poetry category.

Some of the poems in this collection hit me, some didn't as much, but I enjoyed it overall.

My favorite line was from Sky Coming Forward and said this: "What if, between this one and the one / we hoped for, there's a third life, taking its own / slow, dreamlike hold, even now--blooming in spite of us?"

Anatoly Molotkov says

"You're the same/ wilderness you've always// been, slashing through briars,/ the bracken/of your invasive/ self." As other work by Carl Phillips, this book explores intimate territories of loss and the role of time's orchestration in the way we hear the melodies of our lives. Deeply affecting.

Kristal says

Won as a First Reads

A beautiful book of poems. They all seem to be connected in some form or another and reading them in this book seemed like the best way to read them. They made sense and drew connections from previous one. Mr. Phillips is an amazing poet and I haven't enjoyed reading poetry for a long time and this time I truly did. :) 5/5 stars.

Joshua Gage says

Very abstract and dense. Not a lot for the reader to connect with, imagery-wise.

Amy says

The primary themes in this volume are the duality in the nature of things: "at/once both a thing that blinds and a form of blindness" from *On Horseback*, and the duality of opposing forces that allows opposites to exist: "the light without which/there would/be no shadow" from *Roses*. Also, the existence of a different or "third life....even now--blooming, in spite of us" from *Sky Coming Forward*. This duality (read complexity) sometimes makes the speaker uncomfortable with the two-sided coin of himself, but the closing poem ends on a changed voice, which may be conflicted, unhappy and restless, but is also unafraid, resigned yet bared, open.

Some recurring words in the volume: mistake, desire, risk, hunger, restlessness, forgiveness, horse, blue, sea.

Jeff says

A return to form. I can't say when form ever fell off but sometime before Phillips' selected poems, *Quiver of Arrows*, it was possible to read him in expectations the poem's cascading syntax established and then left quiet. Take this bit of epideictic rhetoric from *Double Shadow* and the analogy it implicitly establishes, from the poem, "On Horseback:" "To fuck; to forgive. As if | the two were the same -- no, as when they | are the same. The hawk is neither more nor | less worth praising for the fact that it kills than | for the elegance with which it does so." This use of praise to re-inscribe temporality (interval) as the logic whereby "Distortion works the only way it can," is an extemporizing indeed. The poet leaves that one on the page. The only place it might be left. Nonetheless, the metonymy suggested by the title shivers through the inscription and is -- I think -- memorable.

Danny says

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