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Poetic Diction: A Study in Meaning

By OWEN BARFIELD, HOWARD NEMEROV

Wesleyan University Press December 1984, 1984. Paper Back. Condition: New. 'Only by imagination can the world be known,' writes Owen Barfield. 'And what is needed is that the human mind should become increasingly aware of its own creative activity.' With the intent to consider the point where life and imagination meet (Barfield calls this intersection 'perception'), Barfield focuses the crux of Poetic Diction on the study 'of poetry and the poetic element in all meaningful language.' Borrowing terminology from Coleridge, he divides the imagination into 'primary' and 'secondary' categories. The secondary imagination is at work on the making of meaning, the primary on the making of things. Poetic Diction attempts to show how these two different kinds of making lead to an understanding of human consciousness and its evolution. Poetry hovers over this ongoing evolution, unable to alight until we are lifted above even the perpetual transformation of language itself. 'It is only when we have risen from beholding the creature into beholding creation that our mortality catches for a moment the music of the turning spheres,' he writes. Drawing from a letter Barfield wrote on the symbolism of the cross, this 'progressive incarnation of life in consciousness' is not only...



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