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Avocations: On Poets and Poetry
Essays by Sam Hamill

Avocations collects the best of Sam Hamill's prose on poetry over the last 18 years, presenting insightful readings of Kenneth Rexroth, Denise Levertov, Odysseas Elytis, Matsuo Bashō, Kobayashi Issa, John Logan and many others together with critical commentary on poetry in translation and the practice of poetry in general.

Who can match him for range, passion, and scholarship? What aspect of poetry from Zen aesthetics to political engagement hasn't he pondered in a prose both lucid and serious? Fusing conscience and consciousness, Sam Hamill is our indispensable poet-critic and what he has to say is of utmost importance to all who care about poetry.

—Gregory Orr

The shape of Sam Hamill's mind is the shape of both a revolutionary and a monk at work. His sacred text is poetry. His project is social change through the power of words. *Avocations* is an invocation of grace, courage and compassion. In these smart and supple essays, Hamill reminds us that "poetry demands we change our lives" with "a belief in justice." Beauty is the path. *Avocations* illuminates the way as a torch of great thought in dark times.

—Terry Tempest Williams

About the author:

Sam Hamill is the author of fourteen volumes of original poetry including *Almost Paradise: Selected Poems & Translations*; *Destination Zero: Poems 1970-1995*, *Gratitude*, and *Dumb Luck*; three collections of essays (including *A Poet's Work*), and two dozen volumes translated from ancient Greek, Latin, Estonian, Japanese, and Chinese. He has been the recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Guggenheim Foundation, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, the Mellon Fund, the U.S.-Japan Friendship Commission, two Washington Governor's Arts Awards, the Stanley Lindberg Lifetime Achievement Award for Editing, and the Washington Poets Association Lifetime Achievement Award for Poetry. He is Founding Editor of Copper Canyon Press and in January, 2003, he founded Poets Against War. He lives with his wife, the painter Gray Foster, in a home he built himself in the cedar woods near Port Townsend, Washington.

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