

Print & Digital Editing: Midterm, part two

Instructions: Copyedit the following document using a style sheet and the Track Changes feature in Microsoft Word. **You should do a light edit. You should not rewrite entire sentences.** For reference, refer to the *Chicago Manual of Style*, *Garner's Modern Usage*, and a dictionary (I suggest the OED). You may also use internet sources. You may not, however, consult with another person. When you are finished, upload the edited document and the style sheet to the Canvas "Midterm, part 2" assignment.

Remember: We are working for the reader through the writer.

In a rare interview with *the Southwest Review* in 1982, W.S. Merwin reluctantly agreed to reveal the one *continual* and indispensable ritual that he repeats daily in the hopes of preserving his writerly independence: "I try to be just intolerable every morning," the mild-mannered poet admitted, "so that people will leave me alone." When questioned about any sensory processes he goes through while tuning his instruments, Merwin offered only the most essential of them: "Well, I shut the door."

Of course, even the most cranky, dour ascetic must open the door to come out into the world sometimes. In this subtle gesture—the darkened vault of the imagination closing itself inward and opening again to the light—is contained to the spirit of Merwin's accomplished artistic career. It is what James Joyce's Stephen Dedalus ponders while strolling blindly along Sandymount Strand; the ancient mystic pulse, and the systole and diastole of the mind tightening and loosening its grip not only on the world of appearances but on its own fleeting, elusive self. Now—more than two decades after the begrudgingly lean 1988 selected volume—Merwin's new *Migration: New & Selected Poems* gives us the chance to experience the modulations of this hypnotic rhythm over the course of his prolific fifty-year career as one of the most acclaimed (and most googled) poets, essayists, and translators of the later-twentieth century.

In the opening sections of this beautifully bound volume, we rediscover the early books with those vast horizon and ample pentameter lines that allowed the literary apprentice to find a way through the myths of his modernist precursors, and into his own singular style. Here his most persistent personae and emotional themes begin to come to the forefront; the guilt of the wanderer, the rage of the prophet, and the care and scrutiny of the spiritual surgeon. Before long, we encounter with renewed surprise the celebrated middle volumes which focus his dark vision and renounce the conventional narrative—often in fewer than three pages.

This was a rare moment for Merwin; one which does not endure into later volumes and which literary history will likely overlook in its search for his voice and vision. But here it stands nonetheless, with enough imaginative breath to accommodate both the pain of loss and old

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age and the joy of unforeseen plentitude and blessing. It is as emotionally compelling as any of his earlier works. It is the kind of book you would want to lie down with at the end of a long day.

Despite some shortcomings, the impressive collection and several new poems in *Migration* justify Merwin's privileged place as one of the most influential and prolific living poets. Something resolute ensures that his many stylistic changes ring true; whether he's warning us to stay indoors and make no signals or calling us out into the open alongside his lifelong muse.

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