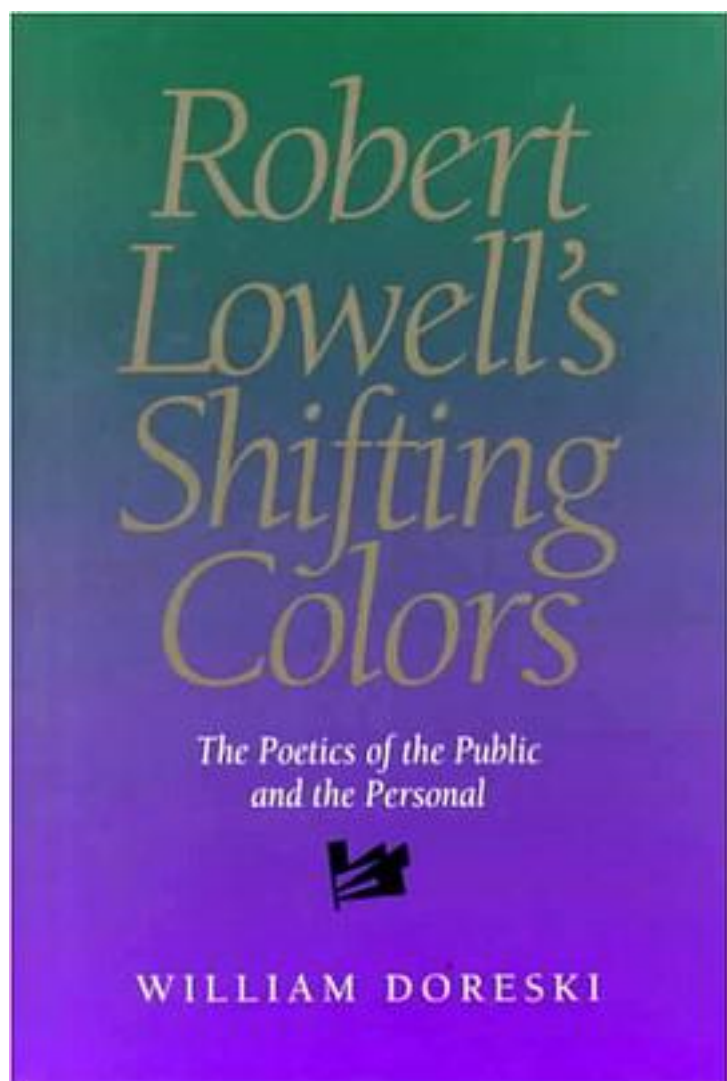


Robert Lowell's Shifting Colors



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In the two decades that have passed since Robert Lowell's death, Robert Lowell's *Shifting Colors* is the first critical survey of the poet's aesthetic efforts to make personal vision and public exhortation cohere and thus combine poetic genres that have been historically discrete. Rather than consider Lowell primarily as either a religious, political, or autobiographical poet, William Doreski proposes that Lowell's primary poetic impulse was to shape differing voices into a single entity in which public and private concerns cohere. This makes him an essential poet for our era, in which the political almost universally seems to have become the personal. Following the course of Lowell's poetic development, Professor Doreski argues that the ambiguity of Lowell's social and religious beliefs, as far as the poems express them, is functional, and that the formal restraints of the poems reveal rather than mask the difficulties he found in formulating public and private values. Rather than attempt to read all of Lowell's work, Doreski points to specific issues that previous critics have neglected or misunderstood. In the spirit of the poet himself, Robert Lowell's *Shifting Colors* emphasizes the process of Lowell's writing, its immense flexibility, the role of cultural, societal, and personal stress, and the generative impulse that shaped the poems of one of this century's major poetic figures.

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