

A More Perfect Union



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Amazon.com It's easy to fall for the Cinderella fantasy of marriage, sketched as it often is with black-and-white strokes: the pledges of undying love, the white dress, the happily-ever-after that the wedding industry promotes. But many a woman on the verge of nuptials finds herself feeling pedestalized, psychically separated from friends and family. Her fears, anxieties, and trepidation may be tamped down, leaving room only for the more acceptable emotions of excitement and joy. In *A More Perfect Union: Poems and Stories About the Modern Wedding*, co-editors Virginia Hartman and Barbara Esstman expertly bring together 44 writers who offer up alternative, more realistic and colorful, universes of marital experience. Poet Jennifer Weinblatt's "Marriage Song for Many Voices" may strike a chord with many such brides-to-be: "marriage is a going forth we / don't talk enough about / the loss a risking what we are..," while a heartrending excerpt from Carson McCullers's *The Member of the Wedding* voices the feelings of those suddenly second-bested by a new groom or bride. And the hilarious "A Memo from Cinderella" puts the lie to the whole fantasy wedding: she had to work on a budget, too! This book also looks forward to the realities of postwedding life. Poet Henry Taylor's stirring "At the Swings" positions the marriage ritual in the larger continuum of life, death, and having children, making the point that wedlock is more than just a pledge between two people. That's an

insight that can help any cold-footed crier see her own situation in a clearer light. --Stefanie Durbin From Publishers Weekly The 44 entries in this collection, subtitled "Poems and Stories About the Modern Wedding, " seem equally divided between traditional avowals of love and the disenchantment, panic and sorrow expressed by those frightened by or disappointed in the marriage bond. They range in tone from lighthearted to poignant and in quality from lightweight to excellent. Selections from the novels of Alice McDermott, Anne Tyler and Carson McCullers, and short stories from Alice Munro, Stephen Dixon and Francine Prose have the complexity and incisiveness one expects from these masters of the craft. Poems by Sharon Olds, Anne Sexton and Jonathan Galassi are tender and moving. Among standout stories by less well-known writers is "Presents, " in which Faye Moskowitz lends a merciless eye to her protagonist, a pregnant 19-year-old unable to accommodate her new body and status to the cynical expectations of the other guests at a bridal shower. The jilted bride in Karla Kuban's striking "Cold Feet" feels a sudden affinity with sharks. Jauntier in tone, Peter Turci and E. Shaskan Bumaz each depict a man's bemused point of view in the midst of prenuptial madness. Some other entries are trendy and thin, but the collection as a whole nicely covers the gamut of contemporary attitudes about tying the knot. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title. See all Editorial Reviews

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