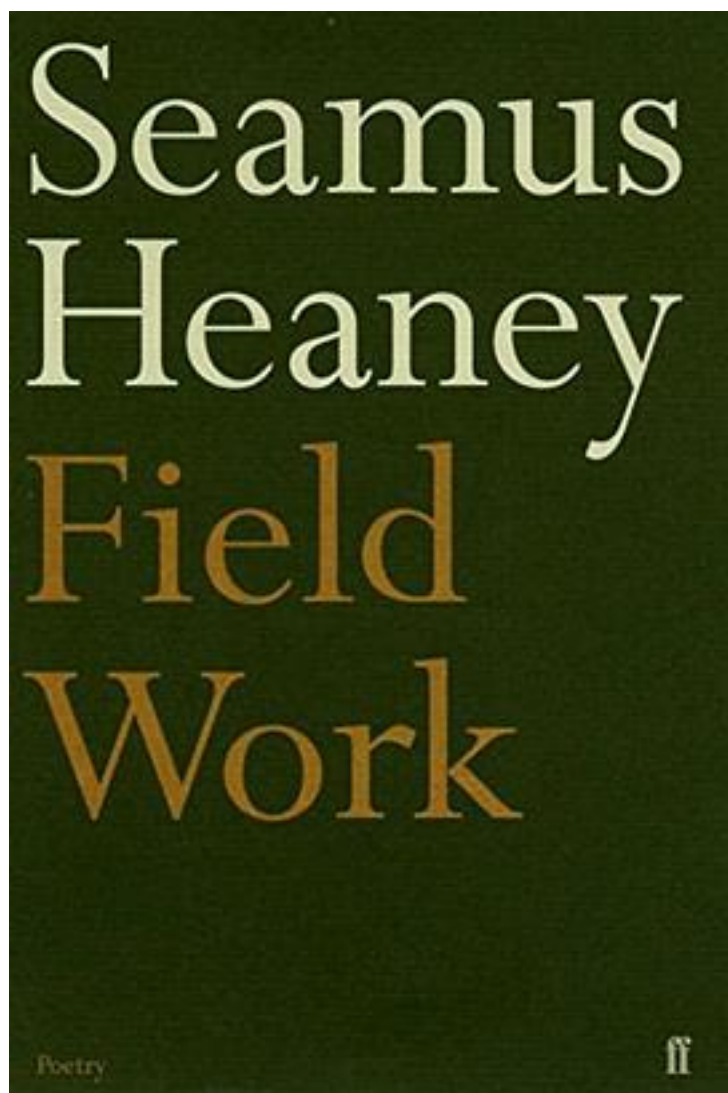


Field Work



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While writing his book, *Lost Mountain: A Year in the Vanishing Wilderness*, Erik Reece spent a great deal of time studying strip mining and its effect on the environment and surrounding communities. After a year of exploring the ugliness of a rapidly disappearing landscape, Reece felt a strong need to celebrate the wonder the Eastern broadleaf forests still have to offer. The result is a collection of poems by individuals who share Thoreau's belief that the natural world is "an unroofed church, a place of reverence." *Field Work: Modern Poems from Eastern Forests* seeks an answer to Frost's question, "What to make of a diminished thing?" by contemplating work from some of the twentieth century's greatest nature poets. Reece frames contemporary American poems with a rich selection of Chinese poetry from the T'ang Dynasty, written by poets who produced what many consider the first great nature writing. More than 1,300 years ago Li Po, Tu Fu, Wang Wei, and Han Shan described a landscape in southern China remarkably similar in landscape and ecology to the forests of Appalachia. Consequently, their work has inspired many of the American poets featured in *Field Work*, including Hayden Carruth, Mary Oliver, A. R. Ammons, Jane Kenyon, and Denise Levertov. The modern poets in this collection share the eastern reverence for the natural world -- they desire to create a poetry of belonging, of elemental contact with something much larger than the self. These poems ask the reader to turn away from urban landscapes in an effort to better understand the natural world as a spectacular, profound organism. Wendell Berry, for example, praises the quiet and solitude of nature, inspiring the reader to experience each poem in the setting for which it was written. In *Field Work*, Reece brings together a collection of poetry that calls readers out of doors as these poems become gateways to a natural world we are often too distracted to see.

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