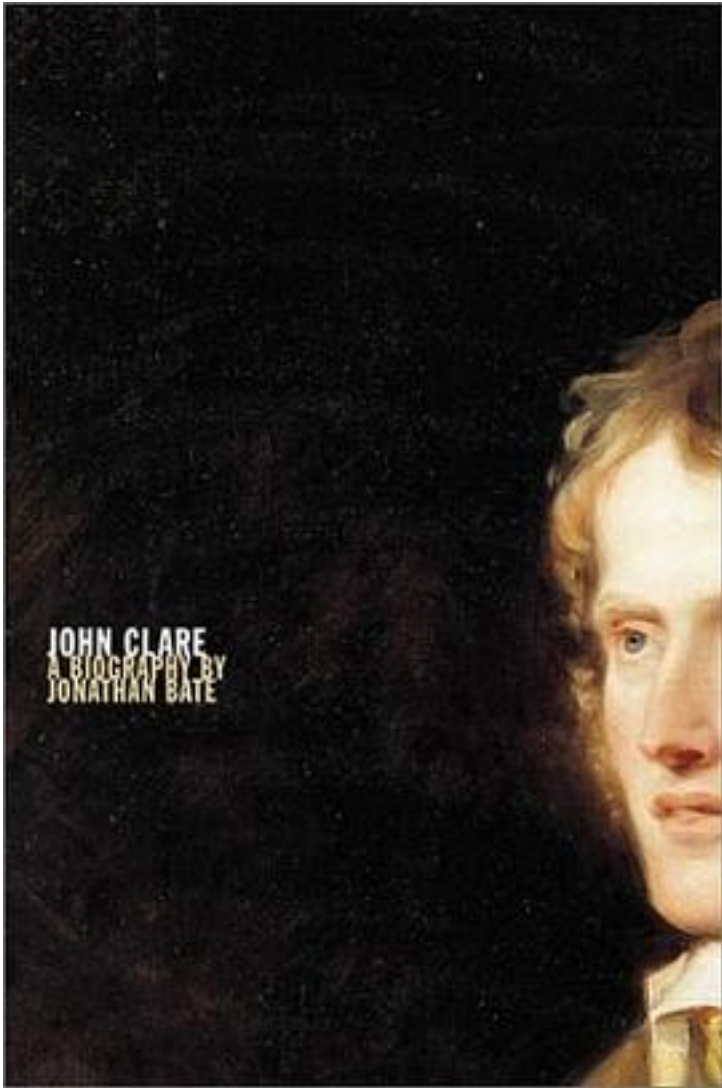


John Clare



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John Clare, Politics and Poetry provides an important challenge to traditional readings of Clare's poetry and career. Clare has been read as the victim of editorial neglect and heavy-handedness and historical circumstance, from agricultural enclosure to a poor market. While subject to external forces Clare nonetheless saw himself as an active participant in shaping his professional career. He was active in ongoing developments in literary taste, despite his reputation as a 'peasant poet', and worked diligently to expand his literary range. This new book examines the traditional portrait of 'poor John Clare', from the aesthetic assumptions behind the initial reception of his poetry to the critical construction of 'Romanticism', and exposes his portrait as a caricature. Vardy recovers Clare's agency by situating him in the historical specificity of the literary marketplace, re-examining his relationship to his patrons and investigating his investments in the social and political questions of the day.

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