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The Star You Steer By

Basil Bunting and British Modernism

Editors: James McGonigal and Richard Price

This book explores Basil Bunting's continued reputation and influence in modern British poetry, and also the impact of a peculiarly 'Northern' inflection of Modernism (which Bunting largely defined) within the varieties of poetry being written in Britain today. The editors asked a variety of English, Scottish, Welsh and American poets and academics to reflect upon the themes, implications, impact or example of Bunting's work in the centenary year of his birth, looking back on the beginnings of Modernism at the start of the twentieth century into which he was born, or forward into the twenty-first century in which he continues to be read and learned from: a true poetic star to steer by.

The resulting collection of fourteen new essays reveals the continued ability of Bunting's poetry both to delight and to challenge. Topics covered include the nature of influence; Celtic and Northumbrian contexts for the modern English long poem; prosodic patterns in early Bunting; Bunting as a reader of his own work; narrative sources in his poetry; the problem of patronage; his 'rueful masculinity'; women poets and Bunting; radical landscape poetry; his translations from the Persian Hafiz and the Roman Horace; economic and social tensions in his work; the poet as 'makar'; and a previously unpublished selection of his letters from the 1960s to the 1980s, commenting upon his own and others' poetry and on the political condition of Britain in those years.

The collection will be of interest to teachers and readers of twentieth century English and American poetry, and to those exploring the processes of literary translation. Contributors include David Annwn, Richard Caddel, Roy Fisher, Victoria Forde, Harry Gilonis, Ian Gregson, Philip Hobsbaum, Parvin Loloi, James McGonigal, Richard Price, Glynn Pursglove, Harriet Tarlo, Gael Turnbull, and Jonathan Williams.

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