



Umpteen Pockets: New and Collected Poems for Children

Books Reviewed:

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New to Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

All you can do with your life

is live it

Poetry's a gift ?

So give it.

Here are the tunes that future generations will hum? said Roger McGough of much loved and much missed Adrian Mitchell's posthumous final volume, **Umpteen Pockets**. It is accompanied by exuberant line drawings by Tony Ross, whose colourful cover features a Pied Piper Adrian look-a-like, surrounded by cavorting creatures and, of course, his beloved Daisy, the Dog of Peace. McGough's prediction that Adrian Mitchell's poetry will live on is echoed by the comments of Laureates, past and present, who jostle to pay tribute to his significance as a poet. In a moving tribute, Carol Ann Duffy writes of him as creating glorious 'voice-music', Michael Rosen praises his 'long-lasting and wonder-making poems', while Ted Hughes reminds us that 'nobody has produced more surprising verse or genuinely inspired fun than Adrian Mitchell'. It took a very special person with a very special talent to draw such accolades. Adrian was a warm, nervy, often hilarious, always brilliant performer of his own poetry and many of those qualities are evident even on the written page. He was also a distinguished writer of musical theatre and the toe-tapping, let's get dancing nature of his work is plain to hear and see. Like his hero, William Blake, Adrian was a man of vision, an inspired singer of songs whose poetry features innocence and experience. Children, animals, the poor and weak, of whom the poet is passionately protective, are set against the bullies of playgrounds and war zones, as well as those who administer the smaller daily cruelties. Sometimes the poems are angry, more often they are amusing, ironic, tender or take off on zany flights of Adrian's inventive imagination. Here we have the best of his excellent back-list, supplemented by a dazzling new poem sequence on the Umpteen Pockets theme: 'A dictionary pocket / full of wonderful words / A rescue cage pocket / for injured animals and birds' Like the man himself, most of all his poetry is about love. Treasure this book.

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