



Uncertain Poetries: Selected Essays on Poets, Poetry and Poetics

Michael Heller

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Literary Nonfiction. Poetry History & Criticism. These essays concern the uncertain nature of twentieth century poetry. Dealing with such major figures as Pound, Stevens, Moore, Oppen, Duncan, Niedecker, Lorca, Rilke and Mallarmé and of poets in more contemporary modernist and post-modernist lineages, they examine how these poets articulate, virtually in the same breath, both affirmation and doubt concerning poetry, history and knowledge.

"For decades, Michael Heller has been making in his poetry one of the most careful explorations we have of the lyric imagination. For nearly as long, readers have relied on *Conviction's Net of Branches* as their gateway into understanding the Objectivists. In 2000, Heller offered us *Living Root*, one of the great spiritual autobiographies in the American poetic idiom. What a pleasure to have these essays, then, collected in UNCERTAIN POETRIES, as an affirmation of the depth and seriousness of Heller's engagement with lyric properties, and as a testament to the vibrancy of his thought and to the admirable intensity of his questioning mind."—Peter O'Leary

"Michael Heller is not only one of our finest poets; he is also one of our best thinkers and prose writers, someone for whom thought is aesthetic. In this volume poetry is the object of exquisite meditations that show it to be alive, delicate—and yet the most powerful force in human affairs. Written under the aegis of an uncertainty that embodies the condition of modernity, Heller's prose is at once supremely intelligent and knowing, deeply philosophical and ruminative, and utterly graceful. What other poet or scholar could be more illuminating? Heller's contribution to our understanding of the poetic act, language, more broadly civilization, is truly extraordinary. It will remain with us for a very long time."—Burt Kimmelman

"Michael Heller believes with Louis Zukofsky that poetry offers 'precise information on existence.' UNCERTAIN POETRIES proves the point, coupling generosity of attention with precisions that are as vital as they are unassuming."—Peter Nicholls

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