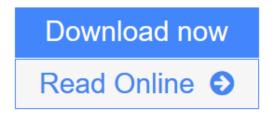


Cowboy Poetry Matters: From Abilene to the Mainstream: Contemporary Cowboy Writing



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In his groundbreaking essay "Can Poetry Matter?" (reprinted here), Dana Gioia suggested that many types of poetry, assumed by some readers to be marginal art, should not so easily be deleted from mainstream American literature. Throughout the twentieth century, perhaps no important writing has been as seriously -- and mistakenly -- overlooked by the literati as Cowboy poetry. Essentially connected to the folk tale, to legend, myth, the ballad, and song, and vitally enhanced by the contemporary voices of independent ranch women, Cowboy poetry vividly connects us to our past and our fragile, threatened natural environment.

The writers included here, both working horse-and-cattle people and mainstream authors, share the brand of bold expression and independent thought found only among the best literary artists. Here is not literary theory. Here is literary life.

An anthology as diverse as America herself!

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