



The Daemon Knows: Literary Greatness and the American Sublime

Harold Bloom

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NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY THE WASHINGTON POST AND KIRKUS REVIEWS

Hailed as “the indispensable critic” by *The New York Review of Books*, Harold Bloom—*New York Times* bestselling writer and Sterling Professor of Humanities at Yale University—has for decades been sharing with readers and students his genius and passion for understanding literature and explaining why it matters. Now he turns at long last to his beloved writers of our national literature in an expansive and mesmerizing book that is one of his most incisive and profoundly personal to date. A product of five years of writing and a lifetime of reading and scholarship, *The Daemon Knows* may be Bloom’s most masterly book yet.

Pairing Walt Whitman with Herman Melville, Ralph Waldo Emerson with Emily Dickinson, Nathaniel Hawthorne with Henry James, Mark Twain with Robert Frost, Wallace Stevens with T. S. Eliot, and William Faulkner with Hart Crane, Bloom places these writers’ works in conversation with one another, exploring their relationship to the “daemon”—the spark of genius or Orphic muse—in their creation and helping us understand their writing with new immediacy and relevance. It is the intensity of their preoccupation with the sublime, Bloom proposes, that distinguishes these American writers from their European predecessors.

As he reflects on a lifetime lived among the works explored in this book, Bloom has himself, in this magnificent achievement, created a work touched by the daemon.

Praise for *The Daemon Knows*

“Enrapturing . . . radiant . . . intoxicating . . . Harold Bloom, who bestrides our literary world like a willfully idiosyncratic colossus, belongs to the party of rapture.”—**Cynthia Ozick, *The New York Times Book Review***

“The capstone to a lifetime of thinking, writing and teaching . . . The primary strength of *The Daemon Knows* is the brilliance and penetration of the connections Bloom makes among the great writers of the past, the shrewd sketching of intellectual feuds or oppositions that he calls agons. . . . Bloom’s books are like a splendid map of literature, a majestic aerial view that clarifies what we cannot see from the ground.”—***The Washington Post***

“Audacious . . . The Yale literary scholar has added another remarkable treatise to his voluminous body of work.”—***The Huffington Post***

“The sublime *The Daemon Knows* is a veritable feast for the general reader (me) as well as the advanced (I assume) one.”—**John Ashbery**

“Mesmerizing.”—***New York Journal of Books***

“Bloom is a formidable critic, an extravagant intellect.”—***Chicago Tribune***

“As always, Bloom conveys the intimate, urgent, compelling sense of why it matters that we read these canonical authors.”—*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

“Few people write criticism as nakedly confident as Bloom’s any more.”—*The Guardian* (U.K.)

From the Hardcover edition.

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