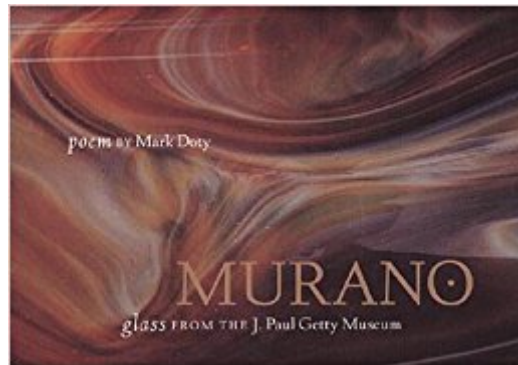




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Murano (Getty Trust Publications: J. Paul Getty Museum)



Synopsis

Murano, a recent work by the distinguished American poet Mark Doty, is a contemplative meditation on human mortality and the mystery of artistic creation. Addressed to his late friend, the poet Lynda Hull, the musings in Murano are set against the backdrop of Venice and the glassmaker's art, as practiced for centuries on the island of Murano in the Venetian lagoon. This moving poem is illustrated with details of sixteen pieces of dazzling Murano glass from the collection of the Getty Museum. These fine, delicate objects paired with Doty's stirring words create an exceptional visual and verbal experience.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"I don't think Mark Doty is capable of writing without grace: beauty in language is articulation for him; beauty in language is a form of meditation. This first thing the reader notices is the gorgeous tapestry of observation and sound, but then one recognizes the unflinching and unsparing quality of the art."--Robert Pinsky, United States Poet Laureate

Mark Doty is the author of *Sweet Machine* (1998) and the memoir *Firebird* (1999). He teaches at the University of Houston.

I'm not sure what to make of this little book. It is certainly printed well, a requirement for an art book.

The closeups of the Murano glass are beautiful. I wish the smaller photographs of the same glass objects in the back of the book were bigger. I got no real impression as to what the glass actually looked like. There must be bigger, more comprehensive books on Murano glass, if you cannot take a trip to the J. Paul Getty Museum, where these treasures are, or in the best of all possible worlds, go to Venice and Murano and see glass until you cannot look at another object. The poem "Murano" though beautiful is not my favorite Doty poem. Written for his deceased poet friend Lynda Hull, the poem contrasts the permanence of Murano glass with the stench and death often associated with Venice. "Is this what becomes of art, the hard-won permanence outside of time? A struck match-head of a city, ungodly lonely in its patina of fumes and ash? Gorgeous scrap heap where no one lives, or hardly anyone." There is no need to combine pictures and poetry. One usually dominates the other. First class poetry does not need to be illustrated. (I certainly think Mr. Doty is a first class poet; his poems often bring me much pleasure. I'm also of the opinion that poetry should be read, rather than explicated. The good poet always says what we cannot explain very well.) Fine art does not require commentary. Books like this are difficult to pull off and seldom satisfy completely. This one is no exception.

I believe that Mark Doty is one of the world's best poets, and have bought most of his books and memoirs. I bought this for my former wife as a birthday gift. She is not a poetry fan, but loves this book. She keeps it on the table in her waiting room with some other reading materials and tells me she has had eight or ten patients ask where they could buy the book. A treasure trove of stunning photographs and words side by side. Being a published poet, I would call Doty's words beautiful musings on the island of Murano, glassmaking and life. A little gem!

I collect glass and books on Murano glass. This book offers no new images or knowledge. It is not for the serious collector but would be fine to give a novice as a hostess gift, stocking stuffer etc. It is nothing more than a mere bagatelle. I would suggest paying more and buying a more useful book on the subject of Murano glass.

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