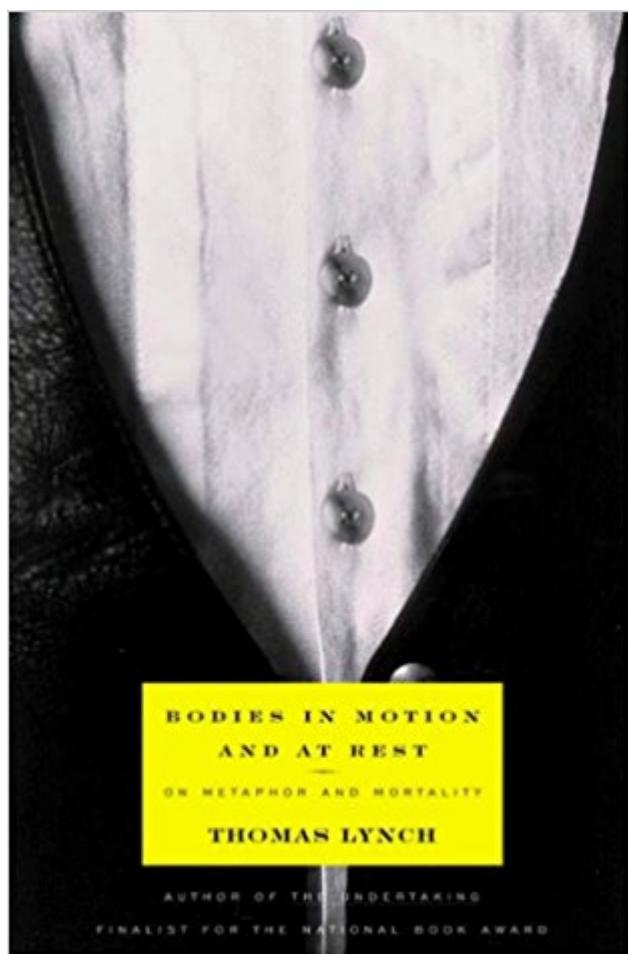


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Bodies In Motion And At Rest: On Metaphor And Mortality



Synopsis

Essays explore the human condition and the choices and changes that are a part of modern life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

All poets who take their jobs seriously spend a good deal of their time pondering death. Few, though, have logged as many hours as Thomas Lynch, who for 25 years has been a funeral director in Milford, Michigan. As might be expected from a writer who performs "daily stations with the local lately dead," Lynch's second essay collection, *Bodies in Motion and at Rest: On Metaphor and Mortality*, has a lot to say about both the current state of his industry (with its "Walmartized" funerals) and the attitude Americans have toward death, which is more or less to pretend it doesn't exist and to hope it never happens to us or anyone we know. Of course, this leads to our inability to properly understand life. And we become one of those stunned mumblers whom the author has spent a lifetime consoling and selling caskets to at Lynch & Sons. As in his previous collection, *The Undertaking: Life Studies from the Dismal Trade*, Lynch muses on contemporary American life with an appealing mix of light and dark. The effect can be striking, especially in his essays on the death of a crafty old gravedigger; the alcoholism he inherited from his father and, devastatingly, watches develop in his son; his divorce and the wicked poem he later writes about his ex-wife. His prose is always lively, though in several essays he relies on the same cultural touchstones--Bill Gates, the Internet, his Catholic-school upbringing and the "wonderful breasts" of the nuns, and (oddly) the Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young song "Love the One You're With." More unfortunately, he can lapse

into familiar generalizations of the "we boomers" or "as an Irish Catholic" variety. Then again, funeral directors must keep an eye on the habits and statistics of generations and groups (as Lynch puts it, "our favorite parlor game is Demographics and Expectancies"), so perhaps a few familiar generalities are excusable--an occupational hazard of the poet-essayist-mortician. In Lynch's case (and there probably isn't another), they seem a fair exchange for his entertaining and often surprisingly humble wisdom. --John Ponyicsanyi

Occasionally a book enters one's life at a particularly apt moment. Thomas Lynch's book of essays arrived fortuitously on the day before my father died, and I carried it with me throughout the dark days that followed. I found his essays deeply consoling. To say they are wise and beautiful would be to underestimate the matter. Lynch brings a vast accumulation of life-and-death wisdom to the table, and he makes connections between art and mortality that reverberate in the mind. Few readers will walk away from this volume less than stunned and grateful. -- Jay Parini, author of *Some Necessary Angels : Essays on Writing and Politics*

The eloquence of these studies, the ingenuity of these meditations, and the wit of these terminations (surely the right word here) afford Lynch his continuity with Sir Thomas Browne and with Donne's *Biathanatos*: his plot, as is said in the trade, is neat, and his mortality remains. -- Richard Howard

Thomas Lynch contrives to be both passionate and wry, both serious and witty in a way that's hard to define and impossible not to notice: this is that rarest of things nowadays, an original voice. His--what does one call them?--meditations, ruminations, riffs on the quick and the dead are fast becoming indispensable to our language and the bookshelf. A luminous work of words. -- Nicholas Delbanco, author of *The Lost Suitcase*

I've read it multiple times and gifted it twice. If you can enjoy unpretentious stories about lives and their endings, told by a voice warm and familiar as your favourite whiskey and a furry friend... then I recommend this book to you.

The only thing better than reading Tom's writing is hearing him read. I am lucky to live in his home state of Michigan. His work is both lyrical and enlightening.

Thomas Lynch is a favorite. He can put words together most agreeably and euphoniously - it's almost like singing. I watch for him to publish.

Love Lynch and enjoy his honesty about life. Dying is part of living, a truth that is often forgotten.

great price

While not his best work, it's still humorous and touching

Author/Undertaker Lynch has a gift for word play in addressing many areas of life, but mostly death & dying. A book you will lend and recommend.

The book by Thomas Lynch is superb....at least the first several chapters are. The introduction is wonderful with many statements that I saved in my "favorite quotation" folder. The first several essays leave you with a lot to think about, but the last couple are about the importance of poetry, and this is clearly Lynch's "hobbyhorse." On the whole, the book is powerful and well worth reading.

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