

TAKE YOUR POET TO WORK DAY

July 16, 2014

Adrienne Rich



*The moment of change
is the only poem.*

Adrienne Rich was an American poet born in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1929, to a physician and concert pianist. She graduated from Radcliffe College and published *A Change of World*, in 1951. The collection of poems, her first, earned the Yale Younger Poets Award. Rich's early work was marked by an adherence to structure and form, about which Randall Jarrell remarked that Rich "cannot help seeming to us a sort of princess in a fairy tale."

Rich did not leave critics and readers with this impression for long, with notable shifts taking place in both her personal life and her work by the 60s and 70s. With three children by the time she turned 30, Rich herself later observed that "the experiences of motherhood was eventually to radicalize me." Her writing moved away from form and meter to free verse, the content to political and feminist themes, an oftentimes angry voice infused with matters of identity, sexuality and social justice. At the same time, she reveals a tenderness in "Twenty-One Love Poems," from *The Dream of a Common Language*. Rich established herself as one of the most noted poets, intellectuals and feminists of our time.

Diving into the Wreck, perhaps her most well-known work, was written amid the turmoil of the Vietnam War, the civil rights and feminist movements and dramatic upheaval in her personal life. The woman W.S. Merwin said was "in love with the hope of telling utter truth" seemed to believe that not to speak was to do more than to silence, it was to extinguish:

"Whatever is unnamed, un-depicted in images, whatever is omitted from biography, censored in collections of letters, whatever is misnamed as something else, made difficult-to-come-by, whatever is buried in the memory by the collapse of meaning under an inadequate or lying language—this will become, not merely unspoken, but unspeakable."

Adrienne Rich died on March 27, 2012.

Want to take your favorite poet to work for Take Your Poet to Work Day?



1. Color your poet
2. Cut out your poet along dotted lines
3. Attach a popsicle stick to the back of your poet with tape or glue
4. Take your poet to work as shown



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