

Sun Out: Selected Poems 1952-1954

Kenneth Koch

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Mr. Koch's poems have a natural voice, they are quick, alert, instinctive . . . He has vivacity and go, originality of perception and intoxication with life. Most important of all, he is not dull." --Frank O'Hara, *Poetry*, 1955

Gathered together for the first time, the exciting, startling early work of one of our finest poets. Writing as a young man in the 1950s, Koch, a member of the now famed New York School along with John Ashbery, Larry Rivers, Frank O'Hara, and others, experimented with the delicate balance between sound and sense to offer a series of poems resembling music or abstract painting. For example, he opens the title poem with: "Bananas, piers, limericks / I am postures / Over there, I, are / The lakes of delectation / Sea, sea you!" Also included are a selection of short plays in verse and Koch's innovative masterpiece, "When the Sun Tries to Go On," a poem that "produces a radical reworking of the life-poem myth predominant in American poetics since 'Song of Myself'" (William Watkins, In the Process of Poetry).

About "When the Sun Tries to Go On," David Lehman wrote, "Koch takes a great deal of delight in the sounds of words and his consciousness of them; he splashes them like paint on a page with enthusiastic puns, internal rhymes, titles of books, names of friends, and seems surprised as we are at the often witty outcome" (Poetry, 1968).

When the poems in *Sun Out* were originally published, they set a standard for the freshness and surprise of language used in extraordinary ways. For almost five decades they have delighted readers lucky enough to find them. It is our pleasure to make them once again available in this new and provocative collection.

From the Hardcover edition.



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