



The One Voice of James Dickey: His Letters and Life, 1970-1997

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This book completes and complements the first volume of the letters and life of James Dickey. Picking up where the previous volume left off, *The One Voice of James Dickey: His Letters and Life, 1970–1997* chronicles Dickey’s career from the unparalleled success of his novel *Deliverance* in 1970 through his poetic experimentation in such books as *The Eye Beaters*, *Blood*, *Victory*, *Madness*, *Buckhead and Mercy* and *Puella* until his death in 1997. A prolific correspondent, Dickey tried to write at least three letters a day, and these letters provide a unique way for Gordon Van Ness to portray the vast and varied panorama of Dickey’s life.

The letters are grouped by decade largely because Dickey’s life was so very different in the seventies, eighties, and nineties. The chapter titles and their progression, as in the first volume, reflect Dickey’s sense that his life and career were a kind of warfare and that he was on a mission. A final section, “Debriefings,” offers a concise overview of Dickey’s full career. In earlier chapters, letters to people as varied as Saul Bellow, Arthur Schlesinger, and Robert Penn Warren indicate Dickey’s belief that this correspondence was a valuable networking tool, likely to open up new opportunities, while other letters, such as ones to Dickey’s oldest son, Christopher, expose the tender aspects of the author’s character.

No other critical study so well projects the development of Dickey’s career while simultaneously exhibiting the diversity of his interests and the often-conflicting sides of his personality. In the strictest sense, this volume is not a life-in-letters, but it does provide a general sense of Dickey’s comings, goings, and doings. Van Ness’s selection of letters suggests an acute understanding of Dickey, and his editorial commentary examines and reveals Dickey’s brilliance.

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