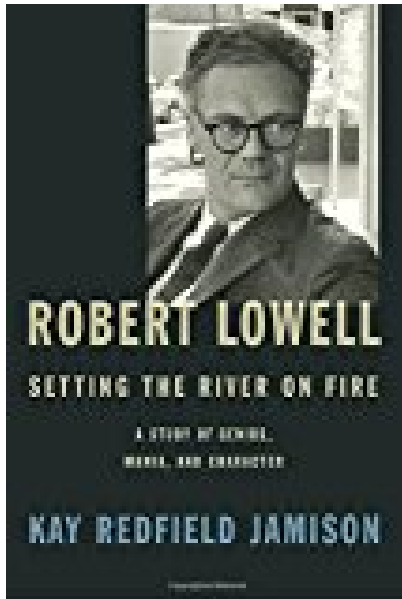


Robert Lowell Setting the River on Fire A Study of Genius Mania and Character



BOOK DETAILS

- Author : Kay Redfield Jamison
- Pages : 560 Pages
- Publisher : Knopf
- Language : English
- ISBN : 0307700275

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BOOK SYNOPSIS

In this magisterial study of the relationship between illness and art, the best-selling author of *An Unquiet Mind*, Kay Redfield Jamison, brings an entirely fresh understanding to the work and life of Robert Lowell (1917-1977), whose intense, complex, and personal verse left a lasting mark on the English language and changed the public discourse about private matters. In his Pulitzer Prize-winning poetry, Robert Lowell put his manic-depressive illness (now known as bipolar disorder) into the public domain, creating a language for madness that was new and arresting. As Dr. Jamison brings her expertise in mood disorders to bear on Lowell's story, she illuminates not only the relationships among mania, depression, and creativity but also the details of Lowell's treatment and how illness and treatment influenced the great work that he produced (and often became its subject). Lowell's New England roots, early breakdowns, marriages to three eminent writers, friendships with other poets such as Elizabeth Bishop, his many hospitalizations, his vivid presence as both a teacher and a maker of poems—Jamison gives us the poet's life through a lens that focuses our understanding of his intense discipline, courage, and commitment to his art. Jamison had unprecedented access to Lowell's medical records, as well as to previously unpublished drafts and fragments of poems, and she is the first biographer to have spoken with his daughter, Harriet Lowell. With this new material and a psychologist's deep insight, Jamison delivers a bold, sympathetic account of a poet who was—both despite and because of mental illness—a passionate, original observer of the human condition.

ROBERT LOWELL SETTING THE RIVER ON FIRE A STUDY OF GENIUS

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