



Henry's Fate and Other Poems

John Berryman

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The poems in this posthumous collection were written by John Berryman between 1967 and 1972, the year of his death. The first group consists of forty-five unpublished or uncollected Dream Songs, included the title poem, "Henry's Fate." The second part includes eleven short poems; the third is devoted to unfinished longer poems, one of which is the extraordinary draft version of "Washington in Love," more ambitious in scope and intention than the version Berryman published in *Delusions, Etc.* This section also includes the "Proemio" to a poem addressed to his children, which Berryman was planning as "my third epic," after *Homage to Mistress Bradstreet* and *The Dream Songs*. The fourth and final section consists of ten poems of the later period, including "The Alcoholic in the 3rd Week of the 3rd Treatment," and "I didn't," a poem written within forty-eight hours of his death.

Henry's Fate and Other Poems has been compiled by John Haffenden, poet and critic, who is at work on the authorized biography of Berryman. In his introduction he reveals that a number of poems turned up in unlikely places: "Old Codger Henry" was found, for example, on a scrap of envelope tucked away in an edition of Coleridge." He cites a satirical epitaph Berryman wrote on himself as early as 1955: "He was a poet. To earn a living--instead of scrounging as he should have done--he lectured on subjects he knew nothing about to students incapable of learning anything." He feels that Berryman "embodied in his life the truth of his own phrase, 'The happier you get the worse you feel.'"

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