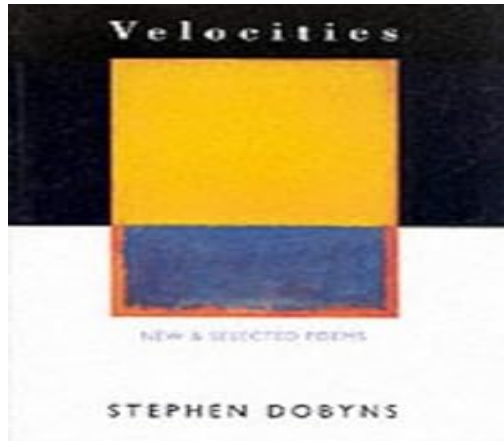


Velocities: New and Selected Poems, 1966-1992 By Stephen Dobyns He has taught at various academic institutions including Sarah Lawrence College the Warren Wilson College MFA Program for Writers the University of Iowa Syracuse University and Boston University. In much of his poetry and some works of non genre fiction Dobyns employs extended tropes using the ridiculous and the absurd as vehicles to introduce profound meditations on life love and art. He has taught at various academic institutions including Sarah Lawrence College the Warren Wilson College MFA Program for Writers the University of Iowa Syracuse University and Boston University. In much of his poetry and some works of non genre fiction Dobyns employs extended tropes using the ridiculous and the absurd as vehicles to introduce profound meditations on life love and art. Velocities: New and Selected Poems 1966-1992 Favorite Poems: "Tenderly" "Pastel Dresses" "Passing the Word" "In the Hospital" "The Place Between Us" "The Ways of Keys" "Letter Beginning with the First Line of Your Letter" Velocities: New and Selected Poems 1966-1992 From my undergrad class: Perhaps the best way to begin this journal is to say that due to time constraints I could not line-by-line read every single poem in Velocities—and I'm saddened by that. Even his most basic linear narratives (such as "Oatmeal Deluxe" and "Tomatoes") a simple story becomes something more—in these two Dobyns touches on the universality of love loss and rebirth without compromising his style into a pile of turgid clichés (yes I was looking for an excuse to use the word "turgid" for a long time). Wikipedia seems to agree remarking that Dobyns' work "employs extended tropes using the ridiculous and the absurd as vehicles to introduce more profound meditations on life love and art." I'm biased because I'm a fan of surrealism and magic realism (which Dobyns interestingly says has not influenced him in the afterword but I'd argue that it has at least indirectly) but the way that Dobyns can forge beauty out of many almost nonsensical landscapes is just brilliant in my book. Not everything works I'll admit—I could do without all those poems about people chopping off their genitalia—but even those might have some redemptive qualities in them if I searched long enough. I'm not sure what separates these poems from tighter pieces of flash fiction even but I honestly don't even care because—for the most part—Dobyns is relatively consistent (though the newer poems aren't as great I'll agree). He's not a one-trick pony though—not every poem has elements of this absurdist style; I caught several reflective poems earlier in Griffon and Heat Death where it seemed natural images such as clouds birds trees sky and water were commonly mentioned ("Rain Song" "Song of the Drowned Boy" "The Body of Romulus" "A Separate Time" "Song for Making the Birds Come"; Dobyns also knows when to be honest and direct in something like "Fragments"). I appreciate the fact that most of his poems are much longer pieces but he even stepped out of this "comfort zone" of his—perhaps—with the set of bare-bones earlier poems on the seven deadly sins. And he still can't resist his patented style in those (bonus points for "I am the cat rubbing against your ankles the hot bath after an afternoon of chopping wood"—just because that's refreshingly sweet in a poem even called "Sloth"). Unusually enough for me one of the reasons I enjoy Dobyns is not necessarily for the language of any one line but for the consistency of a poem and often the strength of his final images (especially in "Black Dog Red Dog"). It's not condensed poetry in general (though some of the early poems based on Anglo-Saxon riddles are gnomic riddling epigrammatic) but rather the wise-cracking writing of a poet with a great sense of sentence rhythm and of the arc of the page-and-a-half poem. Here's a good example of the sort of things that he does in this terrific collection: Spiritual Chickens A man eats a chicken every day for lunch and each day the ghost of another chicken joins the crowd in the dining room. She would grow vain egotistical she would look for someone to fight but being a chicken she can just enjoy it and make little squawks silent to all except the man who ate her who is far off banging his head against a wall like someone trying to repair a leaky vessel making certain that nothing unpleasant gets in or nothing of value falls out. Definitely a bit graphic this book tackles subjects not for the slight of heart but does so with such poignant and striking vocabulary that it is all worth it by the end of the poem. When he realizes that he's surrounded by all these dead chickens he flees and quite possibly goes crazy though it's possible he was already on the crazy train when he sat down at the table. On windy nights the mermaid swings from her double chain so the links chafe and rub making a sound like a creaking door and in that noise the man trapped in the wood puts all

his unhappiness. From Noses - But the nose - tiny rosebud of the mole galumphing snout of the moose bump of the skunk smidgin of the frog - easier to imagine a heaven full of noses than one full of people clouds packed with those soft triangles of flesh. A week of poetry readings meeting other poets strolling with ice creams attending the Saturday night dance at the old hotel no different than dances I had attended in Iowa or Pennsylvania or Detroit,

Velocities presents a selection of poems spanning more than twenty-five years in the career of Stephen Dobyns one of the finest and most original poets of our age. This volume brings together new poems and a generous selection of work from Dobyns's seven previously published collections: Velocities: New and Selected Poems 1966-1992



Dobyns was raised in New Jersey Michigan Virginia and Pennsylvania: He was educated at Shimer College graduated from Wayne State University and received an MFA from the Iowa Writers Workshop at the University of Iowa in 1967: He shies neither from the low nor from the sublime and all in a st Dobyns was raised in New Jersey Michigan Virginia and Pennsylvania. He was educated at Shimer College graduated from Wayne State University and received an MFA from the Iowa Writers' Workshop at the University of Iowa in 1967: He shies neither from the low nor from the sublime and all in a straightforward narrative voice of reason, I get every new collection of his poetry that comes out and am never disappointed, Velocities: New and Selected Poems 1966-1992 I stumbled across Stephen Dobyns on the internet and was blown away by his poem How to Like it: On a whim I bought this big volume of his poetry and found it amazing from start to finish. Dobyns is as approachable and funny as any other poet I've ever read and yet you always leave his poems with something bigger than you might have expected, Velocities: New and Selected Poems 1966-1992 This nearly comprehensive offering of poems from Dobyns is excellent: Fans of poetry can see Dobyns progression from a more lyric style poet moving towards his more recent narrative style in the '90's and today, How to Like It is probably one of his more popular poems in the collection but there is much more to soak up an experience, So much so I recently ordered his latest book of poetry and his more pedagogical focused work discussing the craft and how he approaches it, I'll be keeping this book since Dobyns is the only poet I knew before this class—and I loved his work before this class began, In his trademark quirkiness Dobyns still manages to touch upon something real and emotional so that his poems are not just wasted space: It seems there is more to each piece that meets the eye. I can remember these poems and they stick with me like a hearty casserole: (8) Velocities: New and Selected Poems 1966-1992 Dobyns is a poet for those who like their language weave loose narrative funny profound: He's darker than Billy Collins and funnier than Phil Levine has both the comic and the tragic masks hanging on the walls of his poems: If he could only see them! Hundreds and hundreds of spiritual chickens sitting on chairs tables covering the floor jammed shoulder to shoulder. At last there is no more space and one of the chickens is popped back across the spiritual plain to the earthly, Suddenly there's a chicken at the end of the table strutting back and forth not looking at the man but knowing he is there as is the way with chickens: The man makes a grab for the chicken but his hand passes right through her: He tries to hit the chicken with a chair and the chair passes through her. This is his own private chicken even if he fails to recognize

her. How is he to know this is a chicken he ate seven years ago on a hot and steamy Wednesday in July with a little tarragon a little sour cream? The man grows afraid, He runs out of his house flapping his arms and making peculiar hops until the authorities take him away for a cure: Faced with the choice between something odd in the world or something broken in his head he opts for the broken head. Certainly this is safer than putting his opinions in jeopardy, Much better to think he had imagined it that he had made it happen. Meanwhile the chicken struts back and forth at the end of the table, Here she was jammed in with the ghosts of six thousand dead hens when suddenly she has the whole place to herself: If she had a brain she would think she had caused it, How happy he would have been to be born a chicken to be of good use to his fellow creatures and rich in companionship after death: As it is he is constantly being squeezed between the world and his idea of the world, Better to have a broken head—why surrender his corner on truth?—better just to go crazy, Velocities: New and Selected Poems 1966-1992 I forget who Haden Carruth is was and I have no idea who Thomas Lux is but I don't see what they see, I don't want to trash the book because it's a nice edition I picked up at the fill a bag for a dollar sale. I'll pass this book on to some morbid conflicted scrivener in desperate need of either rope or a poet he's never heard of someday: Someone with a name like Stuor Macklin or Todd whose drugged life's bread is new selected poems: Velocities: New and Selected Poems 1966-1992 Stephen Dobyns is an excellent example of current creative writing: His poems don't read like poems at all but mini short stories. I found myself engrossed in his poems and unable to put this book down. Velocities: New and Selected Poems 1966-1992 I love so many poems from Velocities - Spiritual Chickens Bowlers Anonymous his Cemetery Nights poems, Each poem in Velocities completely submerges the reader in a different and utterly bizarre world: But be careful you will come back wondering about the nature of every person you see on the street, You will come back from these poems wondering about your own hidden worlds. It's a poem about the spirits of consumed chickens inhabiting the dining room of the man who's eaten them, Here's a line from Spiritual Chickens - Meanwhile the chicken struts back and forth at the end of the table: Here she was jammed in with the ghosts of six thousand dead hens when suddenly she has the whole place to herself. He becomes accustomed to the touch of birds' feet the touch of wind and change of seasons but to his suffering and sense of loss he becomes accustomed never: Eventually the tree is carved into a statue of a beautiful mermaid. Mermaid is one of those poems that has taken the meaning of the poem and uses the reader to further its message, Just like the man in the wood the poem has been trapped in me, I often swish the lines around inside of me and like the melancholy sound of the chain become an outlet for the man's emotions: you doze to the steady whoosh of my lungs diminutive car wash of the blood extracting a few dead cells like a monkey picking lice from its mate: Velocities: New and Selected Poems 1966-1992 SPITE I steal your mailbox leave gum on your sidewalk, \*Today I hang myself from a greased flagpole outside your picture window. SOMEWHERE IT STILL MOVES I was having dinner with my friends Howie and Francine: The restaurant was old maybe five hundred years: whitewashed walls great black beams on the ceiling no windows, The waiter kept knocking his head with his fist trying to explain something, Hitting his head like that he seemed to be telling Howie he was stupid: First he would form his hands into a circle then he would give his forehead a smack: Near the Princip Bridge a pair of bronze footprints were set into the sidewalk. This is where Princip stood when he shot the Archduke and his wife. When the waiter bought our dinner there were our plates and on Howie's plate a paper bag like the bag in which a schoolboy packs his lunch, We recalled how the waiter made a circle then knocked his forehead, He could barely breathe for all his laughter We all laughed and drank red wine: The other tables were filled with happy people men and women eagerly discussing the subjects of their passions, When the door opened there was music from the street and a warm breeze smelling of foliage and the dust of a thousand years. Killed by a sniper as he crossed a street or stood by a window: The restaurant the entire block has been transformed into rubble so many rocks at a crossroads. And those other diners those easy eaters those casual laughers? Someone on one side some on the other some blown to pieces some shot in the head, On one particular evening The waiter brought his tray with a paper bag on a plate And we laughed, A fragment of that

sound is still traveling so far out into the dark and arrow perhaps glittering in the flicker of distant stars. He has worked as a reporter for the Detroit News. He has worked as a reporter for the Detroit News. His journalistic training has strongly informed this voice. {site\_link} 80's in the LSU campus bookstore. Dobyns has quickly become one of my favorite poets. Highly recommended. And I love casseroles—so that's a good thing. The man is in the process of picking his teeth. He calls in his wife but she can see nothing. Even the nervous man has disappeared. One of my favorites for sure. The list goes on and on. Dobyns writes the most imaginative poetry. By reading this book you can visit many planets. Spiritual Chickens is pretty straightforward. It's disturbing enlightening and hilarious. Mermaid is another one of my favorites. In this poem a man is put inside a tree. He lives in this tree for some time. Noses and Spleens are two more poems I absolutely adore. From Spleen - meager hunkerer beneath the heart. I seduce your sister ignore your wife. I tear one page from each of your books. I convince you that I am your friend. \*When people ask about you I shake my head. When they tell about you I nod. Yesterday I stole your curtains. We felt we were in the midst of history. As Americans the past seemed absent from our country. The only words we knew were Pivo-beer and Dobro-good. The waiter wore a white jacket black pants. Perhaps he was twenty-five. Okay said Howie sure. Bring it to me whatever it is. This was Sarajevo the spring of 1989. We each placed our feet into these bronze souvenirs. Howie opened it carefully. Brains in a bag lamb brains cooked in a paper bag. This was Howie's dinner He was delighted. There was the constant clatter of silverware on dishes. The waiter laughed with us. He is probably dead now. I've seen pictures in the papers. Scattered scattered. But all that came later. Somewhere it still moves. I must believe that. Otherwise nothing else in the world is possible. We are the creatures that love and slaughter. Velocities: New and Selected Poems 1966-1992.