

# Open Shutters: An Exploration of Memory, Loss, and Identity in Mary Jo Salter's Poetry



**Open Shutters** by Mary Jo Salter

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 1530 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled



Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Print length : 98 pages



Mary Jo Salter's poetry collection, *Open Shutters*, is a deeply personal and introspective work that explores themes of memory, loss, and identity. Through vivid imagery and evocative language, Salter examines the complexities of human experience, offering readers a profound and moving meditation on the passage of time and the search for meaning.

The collection's title, *Open Shutters*, suggests both a sense of openness and vulnerability. The image of open shutters evokes a sense of invitation, as if the poet is inviting readers to enter into her world and witness the unfolding of her thoughts and emotions. At the same time, the word "shutters" suggests a sense of privacy and protection, as if the poet is also guarding her inner self from the outside world.

The tension between openness and closure is a recurring theme throughout the collection. In the poem "Open Shutters," Salter writes:



***“I open the shutters and the world rushes in, a confusion of scents, the clank of metal, the honk of horns, the chatter of voices.”***

The speaker in this poem is overwhelmed by the sensory overload of the outside world. She longs for the peace and quiet of closed shutters, but she also recognizes that she cannot shut herself off from the world forever. The open shutters represent the poet's willingness to embrace life in all its fullness, even when it is painful or overwhelming.

Another recurring theme in the collection is the theme of memory. Salter's poems are filled with vivid memories of childhood, family, and friends. These memories are both a source of comfort and a source of pain. In the poem "The Memory Jar," Salter writes:



***“I keep a memory jar filled with the things I can't bear to throw away:***

***a lock of my son's hair, a dried rose from my wedding bouquet, a ticket stub from the last concert we went to together.”***

The speaker in this poem finds solace in the objects that she has saved from her past. These objects are reminders of happy times, but they are also reminders of the people and things that she has lost. The memory jar represents the poet's attempt to hold on to the past, even as she knows that it is slipping away.

The theme of identity is also explored in *Open Shutters*. Salter's poems examine the ways in which our identities are shaped by our experiences, our relationships, and our memories. In the poem "Who Am I?," Salter writes:



***“Who am I? The one who remembers or the one who forgets?***

***The one who loves or the one who is loved?***

***The one who writes or the one who is written about?”***

The speaker in this poem is struggling to define her identity. She is constantly shifting between different roles and perspectives, never quite sure who she is or what she wants from life. The poem suggests that our identities are not fixed, but rather fluid and ever-changing.

*Open Shutters* is a powerful and moving collection of poems that explores the complexities of human experience. Salter's vivid imagery and evocative language create a rich and immersive world that readers will find both thought-provoking and emotionally resonant. This is a collection that will stay with readers long after they have finished reading it.



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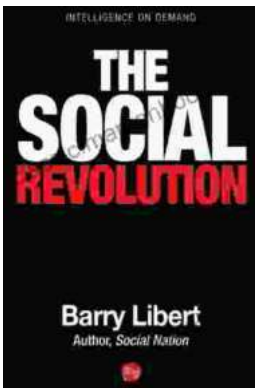
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