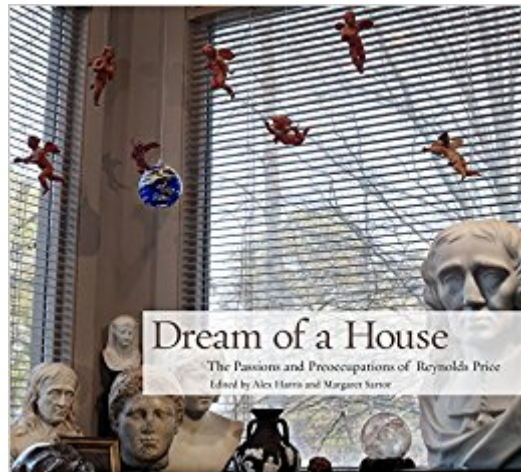


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Dream Of A House: The Passions And Preoccupations Of Reynolds Price



Synopsis

Reynolds Price (1933–2011), who authored forty-one acclaimed novels, memoirs, plays, and collections of poetry and essays, was one of America's most notable writers of the past half-century. His works have a home on the shelves of millions of admiring readers worldwide. Fueled by a brilliant mind and exuberant spirit, Price's singular literary voice not only shines a light on the land and people of his native South, but also on the inherent worth of every person. His enduring belief in beauty, courage, grace, and hope transcends time and circumstance. Confined to a wheelchair for the last twenty-seven years of his life, Price surrounded himself at home with art and objects that he loved. His eclectic and expansive collection—from the etchings of Picasso to photographs of James Dean, from Greek sculpture to religious icons, from busts of his literary heroes to African masks—created a salon-like refuge in which every wall, bookshelf, and piece of furniture signaled some aspect of his essential self. Through his home, Price conveyed his interior life in a way that few were able to experience until now. After Reynolds Price died, Alex Harris was asked by the Price family and Duke University, where Price taught for more than five decades, to document the house before it was sold and the artwork as a living collection disassembled. In this creative work, carefully selected excerpts from Price's writings are interwoven with Harris's exquisite, meticulous photographs. As we turn each page, it is as if Reynolds Price himself is taking us on a guided tour of his home. And as we move through his rooms, Price reveals his private world, recounts significant episodes in his life, and speaks with wisdom and humor about the people, places, ideas, and beliefs most important to him. We also glimpse vital truths about the human condition, finding meaning in our own lives. *Dream of a House* is a remarkable book and a surprising tribute to the passions and preoccupations of this uncommonly gifted writer. Here is a work that speaks to long-time fans of Reynolds Price and to those discovering him for the first time. Alex Harris and Margaret Sartor have done what only true friends and fellow artists could provide: a chance to share in the dream of Reynolds Price's house and his abiding genius.

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Customer Reviews

Reynolds Price was my friend for 50 years. We were from the same place and would in our own ways journey far from eastern North Carolina to the capitals of the world. He had so many talents as a writer, cultural figure, teacher, and role model. With *Dream of a House*, what we now have is a look inside his personal world. We can see what he chose and what he valued and what reinforced him. And we can see the connections between those things. Alex Harris and Margaret Sartor help us to see the man in a wider light and to appreciate a huge idea—that is, the connection between the exterior and interior life, between what we know and what we had not known before.

—Charlie Rose

For almost half a century, the great Southern writer Reynolds Price lived in the same house in the Durham, North Carolina, woods. He seems to have filled nearly every available flat surface and hanging wall space with collected pieces of art—high and low. His home was a kind of tactile museum of his large and generous mind. That museum is gone now, but we are fortunate to have a record of it preserved in this beautiful book by two fellow artists, the photographers Alex Harris and Margaret Sartor, who lived nearby and loved him much. In addition, we have Price's own words to help guide us room to room. The book strikes me as something like being able to put on headphones, for this rare exhibit, and then just wandering at will.

—Paul Hendrickson, author of *Hemingway's Boat: Everything He loved in Life, and Lost*

These images of our dear friend and native son, Reynolds Price, are precious reminders of a lovely life, fully lived and generously shared with those of us lucky enough to have known him. Every page summons the memory of that indomitable spirit and wry conspiratorial humor. How could he be both compassionate and wicked? It is even good to miss him.

—James Taylor

This is a beautiful and moving book. I know Reynolds would be proud.

—Toni Morrison

A writer's home is the familiar place where their deepest spirits reside, where they craft their creative work. *Dream of a House: The Passions and Preoccupations of Reynolds Price* is a moving homage to Reynolds Price by his friends Alex Harris and Margaret Sartor. Harris's photographs and essay and Sartor's afterword reflect their love for Price as they probe intimate spaces in the writer's home. Like both his

written and spoken voice, Reynolds Price's house is a richly textured, baroque world, filled with paintings, sculpture, and photographs of people whom he admired, including Eudora Welty, Leontyne Price, and James Dean. By pairing photographs of the home with text from Price's literary works, Harris and Sartor offer a hauntingly beautiful tour of the artistic world that nurtured Reynolds Price. *Dream of a House: The Passions and Preoccupations of Reynolds Price* is itself a work of art that frames the home, the passion, and the artistry of a truly great writer.

—William Ferris, author of *The South in Color: A Visual Journal* have never had the privilege of witnessing such artistic care and grace taken in the name of another man's journey, legacy, triumph, tragedy, and all that lies in between—truly fit for the king Reynolds was and for the kingdoms Reynolds's words will eternally build.

—Ben Harper "Dream of a House is a gorgeous, fascinating, and inspiring look into the life, mind, and heart of beloved writer Reynolds Price. This is a completely original concept—a biography told through interior photographs of the house Price lived in for 46 years, literally every inch of it occupied by the art he loved. Each photograph is brilliantly paired with a wonderful quotation from Price's own voluminous writing, making this unique volume one of the most meaningful and inspirational books about writing and art—and overcoming adversity—ever published. A moving answer to the perennial question, 'What is the purpose of art?', *Dream of a House* is a treasure for every artist, aesthete, reader, or writer."

—Lee Smith, author of *Key West* Reynolds Price collected passionately all his life, not as an investor but as a man who loved ideas. It's good that his assembly of thoughtful objects has received this beautiful commemoration. In prose, he defined his emotions as precisely as he could, and his plaster casts and prayer-wreathed icons come with his feelings still surrounding them. They were not decoration. They were looked at. They made his life less of a soliloquy, more of a conversation.

—Matthew Spender

Alex Harris is a photographer, writer, and Professor of the Practice of Public Policy and Documentary Studies at Duke University. Harris's photographs are represented in major collections, including the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, High Museum of Art in Atlanta, Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh, and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. His photographs have been exhibited widely, including two solo exhibitions at the International Center of Photography in New York City. As a photographer and editor, Harris has published seventeen books, among them *River of Traps: A New Mexico Mountain Life* (New Mexico, 1990), with William deBuys, which was a finalist for the 1991 Pulitzer Prize in general nonfiction, and *Why We Are Here: Mobile and the Spirit of a Southern City* (Liveright/Norton, 2012),

with Edward O. Wilson. Margaret Sartor is a writer, photographer, editor, and curator who, for many years, has taught at Duke University. Her four published books include *What Was True: The Photographs and Notebooks of William Gedney* (Center for Documentary Studies/Norton, 1999), co-edited with Geoff Dyer, and the memoir *Miss American Pie: A Diary of Love, Secrets, and Growing Up in the 1970s* (Bloomsbury, 2006), which was a New York Times best-seller, a Washington Post Critics Choice Memoir, and a Chicago Tribune Best Book of the Year. Her photographs have been exhibited widely and are in the permanent collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh, and Ogden Museum of Southern Art in New Orleans, among others. As a curator, Sartor has worked with Duke University, the International Center for Photography in New York City, and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

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