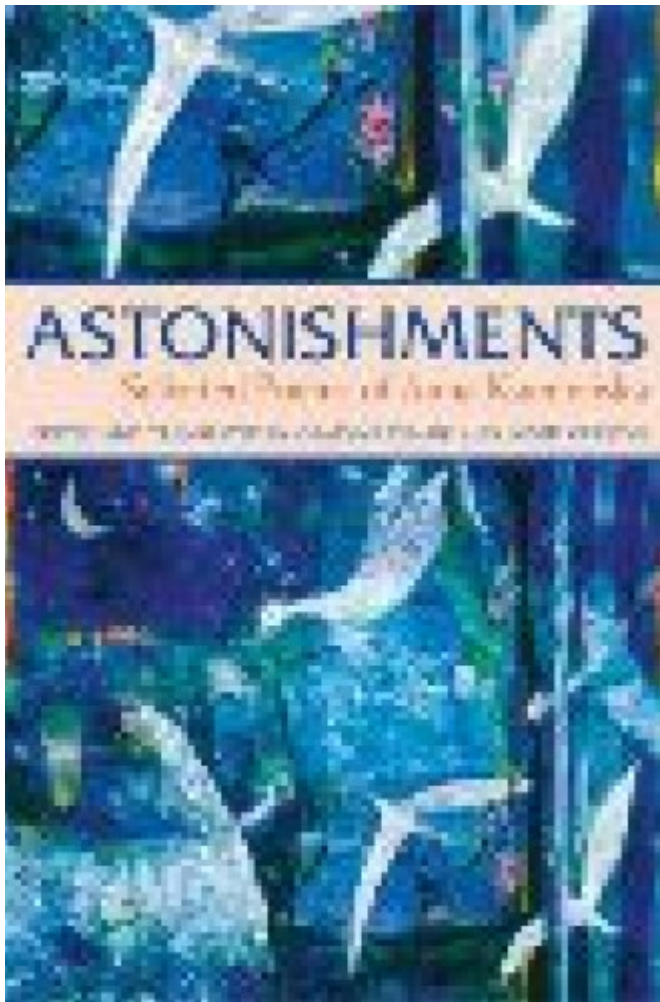


CC recommends

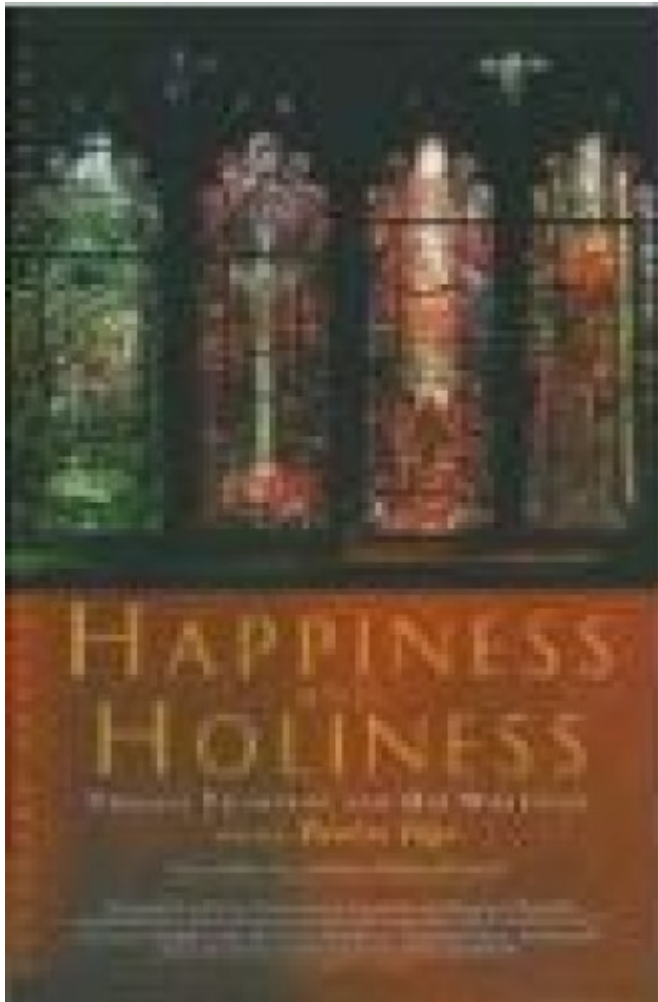
selected by [Christian Wiman](#) in the [December 15, 2009](#) issue

In Review



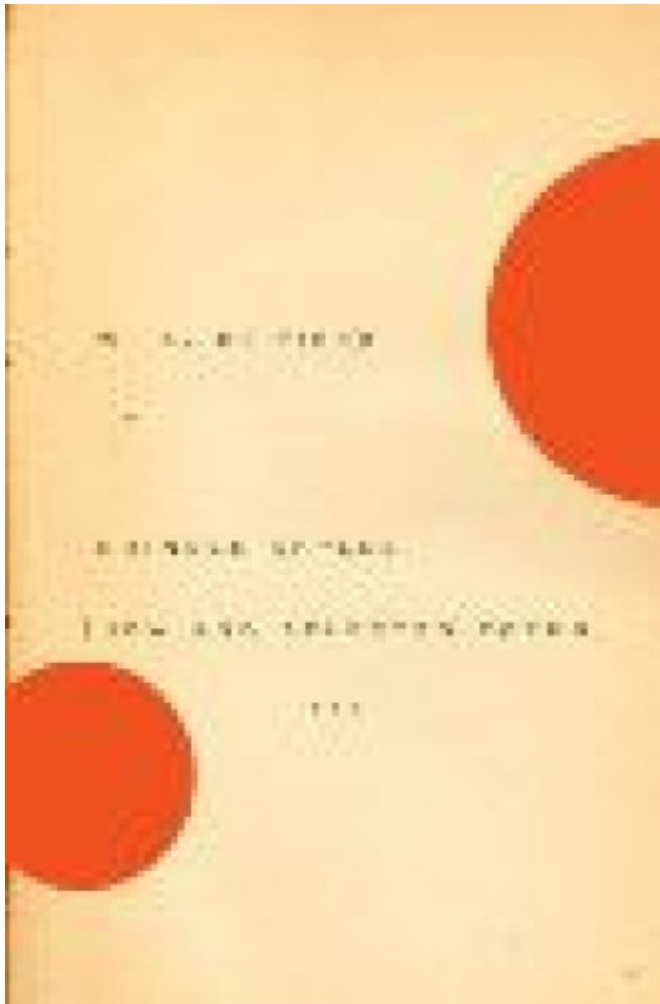
Astonishments

Anna Kamienska
Paraclete



Happiness and Holiness: Thomas Traherne and His Writings

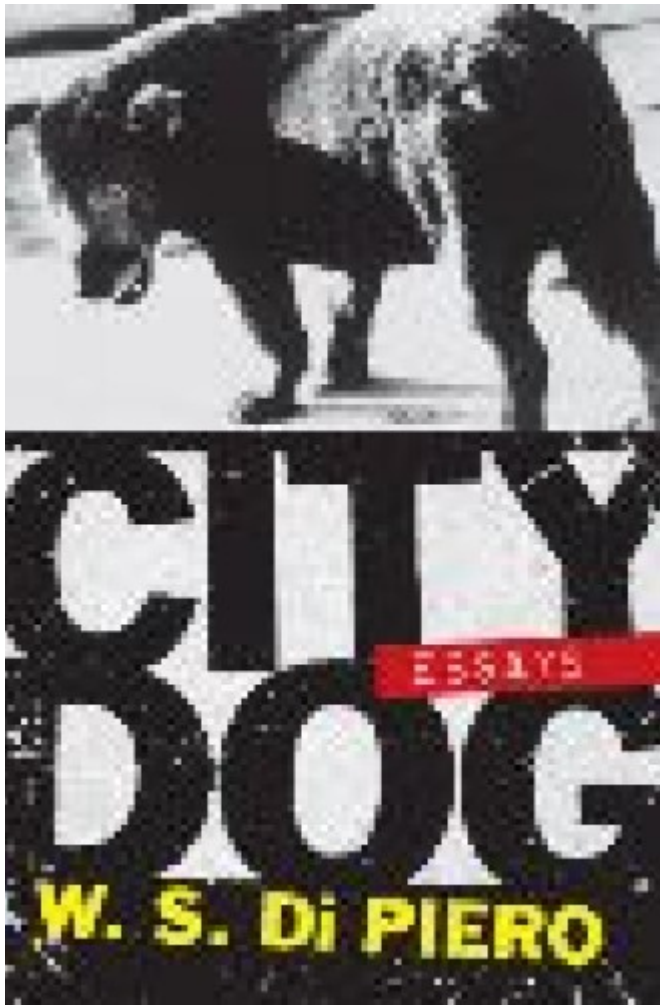
Denise Inge, ed.
Canterbury



Chinese Apples: New and Selected Poems

W. S. Di Piero

Knopf



City Dog: Essays

W. S. Di Piero

Northwestern University Press



The Winter Sun: Notes on a Vocation

Fanny Howe
Graywolf

Kamienska, who died in 1986, is well known in Poland, where her two volumes of intensely focused, intensely religious diaries have many admirers. A selection of these diaries is included in *Astonishments*, and they are indeed astonishing. The poems are lucid and moving, especially one called “A Prayer That Will Be Answered.”

If you don’t know Traherne’s rich, rapturous poems and devotional meditations, this book is a great place to start. And if you already know this 17th-century writer, this book is still full of surprises, as it contains material that was discovered in 1996. The surrounding commentary is uniformly brilliant.

As both a poet and a prose writer, Di Piero is one of the most idiosyncratic, intelligent, original, and criminally neglected writers alive. He’s not a believer, but

his work has a kind of religious residue and seems lit from within by an anxious, almost sacred attentiveness.

This is prose, but Fanny Howe, a Catholic poet steeped in the mystical tradition, has never been timid about collapsing genres, and there are passages in this book so crafted and intact and radically beautiful that they could be prose poems. “What could I call what was calling me?” she asks in the first few pages. “A vocation that has no name.”

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[Poetry](#) ~ [Graphic novels](#) ~ [Children's books](#)

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