



At the Barriers: On the Poetry of Thom Gunn

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Maverick gay poetic icon Thom Gunn (1929–2004) and his body of work have long dared the British and American poetry establishments either to claim or disavow him. To critics in the UK and US alike, Gunn demonstrated that formal poetry could successfully include new speech rhythms and open forms and that experimental styles could still maintain technical and intellectual rigor. Along the way, Gunn's verse captured the social upheavals of the 1960s, the existential possibilities of the late twentieth century, and the tumult of post-Stonewall gay culture.

The first book-length study of this major poet, *At the Barriers* surveys Gunn's career from his youth in 1930s Britain to his final years in California, from his earliest publications to his later unpublished notebooks, bringing together some of the most important poet-critics from both sides of the Atlantic to assess his oeuvre. This landmark volume traces how Gunn, in both his life and his writings, pushed at boundaries of different kinds, be they geographic, sexual, or poetic. *At the Barriers* will solidify Gunn's rightful place in the pantheon of Anglo-American letters.

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