



# Metaphor

*Denis Donoghue*

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## **Metaphor** Denis Donoghue

Denis Donoghue turns his attention to the practice of metaphor and to its lesser cousins, simile, metonym, and synecdoche. Metaphor ("a carrying or bearing across") supposes that an ordinary word could have been used in a statement but hasn't been. Instead, something else, something unexpected, appears. The point of a metaphor is to enrich the reader's experience by bringing different associations to mind. The force of a good metaphor is to give something a different life, a new life. The essential character of metaphor, Donoghue says, is prophetic. Metaphors intend to change the world by changing our sense of it.

At the center of Donoghue's study is the idea that metaphor permits the greatest freedom in the use of language because it exempts language from the local duties of reference and denotation. Metaphors conspire with the mind in its enjoyment of freedom. *Metaphor* celebrates imaginative life par excellence, from Donoghue's musings on Aquinas' Latin hymns, interspersed with autobiographical reflection, to his agile and perceptive readings of Wallace Stevens.

When Donoghue surveys the history of metaphor and resistance to it, going back to Aristotle and forward to George Lakoff, he is a sly, cogent, and persuasive companion. He also addresses the question of whether or not metaphors can ever truly die. Reflected on every page of *Metaphor* are the accumulated wisdom of decades of reading and a sheer love of language and life.

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