John Lawrence Ashbery

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John Lawrence ASHBERY was bom in Rochester, New York on 28 July 1927. He received a BA from Harvard (1949) and an MA from Columbia (1951), went to France as a Fulbright Scholar in 1955, and lived and worked there for most of the next decade.

Best known as a poet, he has published more than 20 collections, beginning in 1953 with Turandot and Other Poems (Tibor de Nagy Editions). His *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* (Viking, 1975) won the three major American prizes: the Pulitzer, National Book Award, and National Book Critics Circle Award. His most recent volumes are *Wakefulness* (Farrar , Straus and Giroux, 1998) , *Girls on the Run* (FSG, 1999), *Your Name Here* (FSG, 2000), *As Umbrellas Follow Rain* (Qua Books, 2001) and *Chinese Whispers* (FSG, 2002).

He began writing about art in 1957, served as executive editor of Art News (1965-72), and art critic for *New York Magazine* (1978-80) and Newsweek (1980-85). A selection of his art writings was issued by Knopfin 1989 as *Reported Sightings: Art Chronicles 1957-1987*, edited by David Bergman (paperback: Harvard Univ. Press, 1991).

The novel *A Nest of Ninnies*, written with James Schuyler, was flrst published in 1969 (Dutton) and has been reissued several times. The collection *Three Plays* (2 Press, 1978) includes "The Heroes," which was first produced in New York by the Living Theater in 1952. Ashbery's numerous published translations from French include works by Raymond Roussel, Max Jacob, Alfred Jarry, Antonin Artaud, and two collections of poems by Pierre Martory , Every Question But One (1990) and *The Landscape Is Behind the Door* (1994) .A selection of his prose pieces, edited by Eugene Richie, is forthcoming from the University of Michigan Press.

His work has been translated into more than twenty languages.

Ashbery was Professor of English and co-director of the MFA program in Creative Writing at Brooklyn College (CUNY), 1974-90, and Distinguished Professor 1980-90. He delivered the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures at Harvard in 1989-90, published as *Other Traditions* (Harvard Univ. Press, 2000). Since 1990 he has been the Charles P. Stevenson, Jr. Professor of Languages and Literature at Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York.

He has been elected to membership in the American Academy of Arts and Letters (1980) and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (1983), and served as Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets from 1988-99. The winner of many prizes and awards, he has received two Guggenheim Fellowships and was a MacArthur Fellow from 1985-90. He holds honorary doctorates from Southampton College of Long Island University, the University of Rochester (NY), and Harvard University. International recognition for his outstanding career achievement includes the Horst Bienek Prize for Poetry (Bavarian Academy ofFine Arts, Munich, 1991), the Ruth Lilly Prize for Poetry (*Poetry* magazine, Modern Poetry Association and the American Council for the Arts, 1992), the Antonio Feltrinelli Intemational Prize for Poetry (Academia

Nazionale dei Lincei, Rome, 1992), the Robert Frost Medal (Poetry Society of ~ America, 1995) , the Grand Prix de Biennales Internationales de poesie (Brussels, 1996), the Gold Medal for Poetry (American Academy of Arts and Letters, 1997) , the Walt Whitman Citation of Merit (State of New York and the I~ New York State Writers Institute, 2000), the Signet Society Medal for Achievement in the Arts (Signet Associates, Harvard University, 2001), and the 1< Wallace Stevens Award (Academy of American Poets, 2001); in 1993 he was made a Chevalier de 1 'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture, and in 2002 he was named Officier of the Legion d'Honneur of the Republic of France by presidential decree.

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