



After the Point of No Return

David Wagoner

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"Wagoner's words are a living link to the world, enacting it so vitally that they feel like natural facts."—*The Seattle Times*

In his twenty-fourth book of poetry, David Wagoner reflects on youth, love, regret, and expectation versus reality. Here a master writes at top form, back-dropped by life's curious moments and imagining Jesus as an untidy roommate or considering our final destination in "Beginner's Guide to Death."

"After the Point of No Return"

*After that moment when you've lost all reason
for going back where you started, when going ahead
is no longer a Yes or No, but a matter of fact,
you'll need to weigh, on the one hand, what will seem,
on the other, almost nothing against something*

*slightly more than nothing and must choose
again and again, at points of fewer and fewer
chances to guess, when and which way to turn.*

*That's when you might stop thinking about stars
and storm clouds, the direction of wind,
the difference between rain and snow, the time
of day or the lay of the land, about which trees
mean water, which birds know what you need
to know before it's too late, or what's right here
under your feet, no longer able to tell you*

where it was you thought you had to go.

David Wagoner is the author of two dozen books of poetry and ten novels. A longtime teacher at University of Washington, he was the editor at *Poetry Northwest*. He lives in Seattle, Washington.

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