

crush richard siken review

crush richard siken review explores the powerful and evocative poetry collection by Richard Siken, a poet renowned for his intense emotional depth and vivid imagery. This review delves into the thematic elements, stylistic features, and overall impact of Siken's work, highlighting why "Crush" has become a significant contribution to contemporary American poetry. The article examines the ways in which Siken's language captures the complexities of desire, violence, love, and longing. Additionally, this review discusses the reception of the book among critics and readers, shedding light on its critical acclaim and enduring relevance. Readers will gain a comprehensive understanding of the poetic techniques employed by Siken and the reasons behind the collection's widespread admiration. This analysis serves as an essential guide for poetry enthusiasts, students, and literary scholars interested in modern poetry's emotional and aesthetic dimensions.

- Overview of Richard Siken and "Crush"
- Thematic Analysis of "Crush"
- Stylistic and Structural Elements
- Critical Reception and Impact
- Notable Poems and Key Passages
- Significance in Contemporary Poetry

Overview of Richard Siken and "Crush"

Richard Siken is a contemporary American poet whose debut collection, "Crush," has garnered significant attention since its publication. Known for its raw emotional intensity and cinematic imagery, "Crush" is a collection that explores themes of love, obsession, trauma, and identity. Siken's background and poetic influences contribute to the unique voice that permeates the book. His work often reflects a blend of personal experience and universal emotion, creating poems that resonate deeply with readers. "Crush" won prestigious awards, such as the Yale Series of Younger Poets Prize, solidifying Siken's position in the literary world. This collection is characterized by its urgent tone, fragmented narratives, and a deep exploration of human vulnerability.

About Richard Siken

Richard Siken grew up in New York and has been influenced by a range of poets and artists, including Frank O'Hara and Susan Sontag. His poetry often incorporates elements of visual art and film, which is evident in the vivid and dynamic imagery found in "Crush." Beyond poetry, Siken's works have appeared in various literary journals, and he has contributed to the broader discourse on LGBTQ+ themes in literature. His voice is distinct for its emotional directness and complexity, making him a pivotal figure in contemporary American poetry.

The Book "Crush"

"Crush" is Siken's first major published work, released in 2005. The collection consists of poems that vary in length and form but share a common intensity and focus on the emotional landscape of the speaker. The title itself evokes themes of longing and infatuation, but the poems often transcend simple romantic notions to explore darker and more complicated facets of desire and pain. The book's structure is non-linear, contributing to the feeling of urgency and fragmentation that defines much of the poetry within.

Thematic Analysis of "Crush"

The themes in "Crush" are multifaceted, touching on love, violence, mortality, and the complexities of human relationships. Siken's poems frequently explore the intersection of desire and danger, portraying love as both a source of ecstasy and potential destruction. This duality is central to understanding the emotional power of the collection.

Love and Desire

At its core, "Crush" is an exploration of intense romantic and sexual desire. The poems convey an urgency and vulnerability that reflect the speaker's yearning for connection. However, Siken complicates traditional notions of love by incorporating elements of obsession and fear, suggesting that desire can be both fulfilling and devastating.

Violence and Trauma

Violence, both physical and emotional, is a recurring motif in "Crush." The poems often depict moments of

crisis or trauma, reflecting the darker side of human experience. This theme underscores the fragility of life and relationships, highlighting how quickly passion can turn into pain.

Mortality and Impermanence

Siken's work contemplates mortality and the transient nature of existence. The poems address the inevitability of death and loss, imbuing moments of beauty and love with a poignant sense of impermanence. This awareness adds depth to the emotional resonance of the collection.

Stylistic and Structural Elements

The poetic style of "Crush" is notable for its intensity, fragmentation, and vivid imagery. Siken employs a range of structural techniques to create a sense of immediacy and emotional complexity.

Imagery and Language

Siken's language is often described as cinematic, with striking visual and sensory details that draw readers into the poems' emotional world. His use of metaphor and symbolism enriches the text, allowing multiple layers of meaning to emerge. The imagery is frequently stark and raw, reinforcing the themes of desire and violence.

Form and Structure

The poems in "Crush" do not follow a strict formal pattern but instead utilize free verse and varied line lengths to reflect the intensity of the speaker's emotions. The fragmented structure mirrors the chaotic nature of passion and trauma, creating a rhythm that is both urgent and unsettling.

Repetition and Sound Devices

Repetition is a key stylistic device in "Crush," used to emphasize particular emotions and ideas. Siken also employs alliteration, assonance, and internal rhyme to enhance the musicality of the poems, making the experience of reading them both visceral and memorable.

Critical Reception and Impact

Since its release, "Crush" has been widely praised by critics and readers alike. The collection has been recognized for its emotional honesty and innovative approach to contemporary poetry.

Acclaim and Awards

"Crush" received the Yale Series of Younger Poets Prize, a prestigious award that helped launch Richard Siken's career. Critics have lauded the collection for its intense emotional expression and unique voice, often highlighting its impact on LGBTQ+ literature and modern poetry.

Influence on Contemporary Poetry

The success of "Crush" has influenced a generation of poets interested in exploring themes of identity, desire, and trauma. Siken's stylistic innovations and thematic depth have contributed to expanding the boundaries of American poetry, encouraging more open and vulnerable expressions of human experience.

Reader and Community Response

The collection has resonated strongly within various communities, particularly among LGBTQ+ readers who find representation and emotional truth in Siken's work. The poems have been widely shared and studied, becoming staples in contemporary poetry curricula and readings.

Notable Poems and Key Passages

Several poems from "Crush" stand out for their emotional power and artistic craftsmanship. These works exemplify the collection's core themes and stylistic strengths.

"Scheherazade"

This poem is often cited as one of the most iconic in the collection. It juxtaposes storytelling and violence, exploring the tension between creation and destruction in relationships. The vivid imagery and rhythmic

flow make it a centerpiece of "Crush."

"You Are Jeff"

"You Are Jeff" exemplifies the personal and direct tone of Siken's poetry. The poem captures longing and identity with a narrative voice that is intimate yet universal, showcasing Siken's ability to connect deeply with readers.

Other Key Passages

- Moments of repetition that emphasize obsession and desire
- Imagery depicting physical and emotional vulnerability
- Lines that convey the tension between love and violence

Significance in Contemporary Poetry

"Crush" occupies a significant place in the landscape of 21st-century poetry. Its exploration of intense emotional experiences and innovative stylistic approaches exemplify the evolving nature of poetic expression.

Contribution to LGBTQ+ Literature

Richard Siken's work is particularly important within LGBTQ+ literature, providing representation and articulating the complexities of queer desire and identity. "Crush" challenges traditional narratives and broadens the scope of contemporary poetry to include marginalized voices.

Advancement of Poetic Form

The collection's fragmented and cinematic style has inspired poets to experiment with form and narrative

structure. Siken's blending of emotional rawness with formal innovation marks "Crush" as a pivotal work in modern poetry's development.

Enduring Appeal

More than a decade after its publication, "Crush" continues to resonate with new readers and scholars. Its emotional depth, linguistic precision, and thematic complexity ensure its place as a classic of contemporary poetry.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the overall impression of Richard Siken's 'Crush' in most reviews?

Most reviews of Richard Siken's 'Crush' highlight its intense emotional depth and vivid imagery, praising it as a powerful exploration of love, desire, and vulnerability.

How do critics describe the style of poetry in 'Crush' by Richard Siken?

Critics often describe the style of poetry in 'Crush' as raw, urgent, and fragmented, with a unique blend of narrative and lyrical elements that convey a sense of immediacy and emotional complexity.

What themes are commonly noted in reviews of Richard Siken's 'Crush'?

Common themes noted in reviews include obsession, violence, longing, and the complexities of intimate relationships, often portrayed through a lens of both beauty and pain.

Is 'Crush' by Richard Siken recommended for readers new to poetry?

While 'Crush' is highly praised, some reviewers suggest it may be more impactful for readers who appreciate intense and sometimes challenging poetry, due to its emotional intensity and fragmented style.

How has 'Crush' by Richard Siken influenced contemporary poetry according to reviews?

Reviews often credit 'Crush' with influencing contemporary poetry by pushing boundaries in emotional expression and narrative form, inspiring many poets with its bold and innovative approach.

What do readers say about the emotional impact of 'Crush' by Richard Siken in reviews?

Readers frequently mention that 'Crush' delivers a profound emotional impact, resonating deeply with those who have experienced intense love and heartbreak, making it a memorable and moving collection.

Additional Resources

1. *Crush by Richard Siken: A Poetic Exploration of Desire and Danger*

This review delves into Richard Siken's debut poetry collection, "Crush," highlighting its intense emotional landscape and vivid imagery. The book explores themes of love, obsession, and vulnerability through a raw and urgent voice. The review praises Siken's ability to capture the complexity of human desire and the fragility of relationships.

2. *The Art of Richard Siken: Analyzing the Poetic Style in Crush*

Focusing on Siken's unique stylistic choices, this analysis examines the fragmented narratives and lyrical intensity found in "Crush." It discusses how his use of repetition, vivid metaphors, and rhythmic pacing creates an immersive reading experience. The review also explores how Siken's poetry bridges the gap between personal confessions and universal emotions.

3. *Love and Violence in Richard Siken's Crush: A Critical Review*

This critical review addresses the juxtaposition of love and violence in "Crush," emphasizing how Siken portrays the darker sides of passion. It considers the psychological depth of the poems and their impact on readers. The review argues that the collection challenges traditional notions of romantic poetry through its raw and sometimes unsettling content.

4. *Richard Siken's Crush and the Modern Queer Experience*

Examining "Crush" through the lens of queer literature, this review highlights how Siken represents queer identity and desire with authenticity and intensity. It discusses the significance of his voice in contemporary poetry and the ways his work resonates with LGBTQ+ readers. The review also touches on themes of longing, fear, and connection within queer relationships.

5. *Emotional Intensity and Narrative Voice in Crush by Richard Siken*

This review focuses on the emotional power of Siken's poetry and the distinctive narrative voice that drives "Crush." It analyzes how the poems create a sense of immediacy and urgency, pulling readers into the speaker's inner world. The review also comments on the balance between vulnerability and strength in Siken's writing style.

6. *The Influence of Richard Siken's Crush on Contemporary Poetry*

This piece explores how "Crush" has influenced modern poets and the broader landscape of contemporary poetry. It discusses the collection's impact on poetic themes, form, and emotional expression. The review highlights Siken's role in shaping a new poetic voice that embraces complexity and emotional honesty.

7. *Comparing Richard Siken's Crush to Other Modern Poetry Collections*

Offering a comparative review, this article places "Crush" alongside other notable contemporary poetry collections. It examines similarities and differences in themes, style, and emotional resonance. The review provides insight into what makes Siken's work distinct and why it continues to captivate readers.

8. *Exploring Themes of Loss and Longing in Richard Siken's Crush*

This thematic review dives deep into the motifs of loss and longing that permeate "Crush." It discusses how Siken's poems express grief, desire, and the search for connection. The review praises the subtlety and complexity with which these universal feelings are portrayed.

9. *The Visual and Cinematic Qualities of Richard Siken's Crush*

Highlighting the vivid imagery and cinematic feel of Siken's poetry, this review explores how "Crush" creates a visual and sensory experience for readers. It analyzes Siken's use of language to paint intense mental pictures and evoke strong emotions. The review suggests that this quality makes the collection uniquely immersive and impactful.

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crush richard siken review: Writing about Time Cindy Weinstein, 2019 Many of the finest critics working in American literature explore the representation of time from colonial times to the present.

crush richard siken review: **Crush** Richard Siken, 2025-03-25 The twentieth-anniversary edition of Crush, the passionate and influential poetry collection by Richard Siken

crush richard siken review: **Fairy Tale Review** Kate Bernheimer, 2007-01-03 This issue of Fairy Tale Review focuses on fairy tales for adults.

crush richard siken review: **Fear** Robert Peckham, 2023-09-07 'Extraordinary' Ai Weiwei 'Brilliant' Simon Schama Fear has long been a driving force - perhaps the driving force - of world history: a coercive tool of power and a catalyst for radical change. Here, Robert Peckham traces its transformative role over a millennium, from fears of famine and war to anxieties over God, disease, technology and financial crises. In a landmark global history that ranges from the Black Death to the terror of the French Revolution, the AIDS pandemic to climate change, Peckham reveals how fear made us who we are, and how understanding it can equip us to face the future.

crush richard siken review: American Originality Louise Glück, 2017-04-18 WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE A luminous collection of essays from Louise Glück, winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature and one of our most original and influential poets Five decades after her debut poetry collection, Firstborn, Louise Glück is a towering figure in American letters. Written with the same probing, analytic control that has long distinguished her poetry, American Originality is Glück's second book of essays—her first, Proofs and Theories, won the 1993 PEN/Martha Albrand Award for First Nonfiction. Glück's moving and disabusing lyricism is on full display in this decisive

new collection. From its opening pages, *American Originality* forces readers to consider contemporary poetry and its demigods in radical, unconsoling, and ultimately very productive ways. Determined to wrest ample, often contradictory meaning from our current literary discourse, Glück comprehends and destabilizes notions of “narcissism” and “genius” that are unique to the American literary climate. This includes erudite analyses of the poets who have interested her throughout her own career, such as Rilke, Pinsky, Chiasson, and Dobyns, and introductions to the first books of poets like Dana Levin, Peter Streckfus, Spencer Reece, and Richard Siken. Forceful, revealing, challenging, and instructive, *American Originality* is a seminal critical achievement.

crush richard siken review: *Harvard Review* , 2007

crush richard siken review: *The Antioch Review* John Donald Kingsley, 2005

crush richard siken review: *The Best American Poetry 2014* David Lehman, Terrance Hayes, 2014-09-09 National Book Award-winning poet Terrance Hayes selects the poems for the 2014 edition of *The Best American Poetry*, “a ‘best’ anthology that really lives up to its title” (*Chicago Tribune*). The first book of poetry that Terrance Hayes ever bought was the 1990 edition of *The Best American Poetry*, edited by Jorie Graham. Hayes was then an undergrad at a small South Carolina college. He has since published four highly honored books of poetry, is a professor of poetry at the University of Pittsburgh, has appeared multiple times in the series, and is one of today’s most decorated poets. His brazen, restless poems capture the diversity of American culture with singular artistry, grappling with facile assumptions about identity and the complex repercussions of race history in this country. Always eagerly anticipated, the 2014 volume of *The Best American Poetry* begins with David Lehman’s “state-of-the-art” foreword followed by an inspired introduction from Terrance Hayes on his picks for the best American poems of the past year. Following the poems is the apparatus for which the series has won acclaim: notes from the poets about the writing of their poems.

crush richard siken review: *Rain Taxi Review of Books* , 2004

crush richard siken review: *Five Fingers Review* , 2002

crush richard siken review: *Book Review Index* , 2006 Every 3rd issue is a quarterly cumulation.

crush richard siken review: *Write Moves* Nancy Pagh, 2016-08-04 *Write Moves* is an invitation for the student to understand and experience creative writing in the larger frame of humanities education. The practical instruction offered comes in the form of “moves” or tactics for the apprentice writer to try. But the title also speaks to a core value of this project: that creative writing exists to move us. The book focuses on concise, human-voiced instruction in poetry, the short story, and the short creative nonfiction essay. Emphasis on short forms allows the beginning student to appreciate lessons in craft without being overwhelmed by lengthy model texts; diverse examples of these genres are offered in the anthology.

crush richard siken review: *PN Review* , 2005

crush richard siken review: *Love Like This Isn't Harmless* Bron Bateman, 2025-07-01 Through a fiercely feminist lens, Bateman's latest collection of poems confronts tough themes like sexual abuse and domestic violence with unapologetic honesty and profound insight. From intimate portrayals of family dynamics to reimaginings of mythos, these poems will spark conversation and contemplation.

crush richard siken review: *Annual Report* National Endowment for the Arts, 2002 Reports for 1980-19 also include the Annual report of the National Council on the Arts.

crush richard siken review: *Invisible Strings* Kristie Frederick Daugherty, 2024-12-03 An anthology of brand-new poems inspired by Taylor Swift songs, from a powerhouse group of contemporary poets, including Kate Baer, Maggie Smith, and Joy Harjo. Let the decoding begin! With a record-breaking four Grammy awards for Album of the Year, Taylor Swift stands alone in the world of pop music. One of the most talented lyricists of all time, her music captivates millions of fans throughout the globe with the narrative depth and emotional resonance of her songwriting. In *Invisible Strings*, poet, professor, and dedicated Swiftie Kristie Frederick Daugherty has brought

together 113 contemporary poets, each contributing an original poem that responds to a specific Taylor Swift song. In a spirit of celebration and collaboration, poets have taken a cue from Swift's love of dropping clues and puzzles for her fandom to decode, as each poem alludes to a song without using direct lyrics. Swifties will enjoy closely reading each of the poems to discover which song each poet responded to; each poem responds to only one song. The collection showcases a diverse and accomplished array of writers including the 23rd US Poet Laureate Joy Harjo, Pulitzer Prize winners Diane Seuss, Yusef Komunyakaa, Carl Phillips, Rae Armantrout, Paul Muldoon, and Gregory Pardlo, National Book Critics Circle Award winners Mary Jo Bang and Laura Kasischke, and bestselling poets Maggie Smith, Aimee Nezhukumatathil, Kate Baer, Amanda Lovelace, Tyler Knott Gregson, and Jane Hirshfield. Swifties will experience the profundity and nuance of Swift's lyrics through these poems, while having fun matching the poems to songs from all of her eras—vault tracks included! For poetry lovers, this one-of-a-kind anthology is an unparalleled collection of new work from today's most lauded and revered poets.

crush richard siken review: Pop Song Larissa Pham, 2022-05-17 A warm and expansive portrait of a woman's mind that feels at once singular and universal, this collection of essays interweaves commentary on modern life, feminism, art, and sex with the author's own experiences of obsession, heartbreak, and vulnerability (BuzzFeed). Like a song that feels written just for you, Larissa Pham's debut work of nonfiction captures the imagination and refuses to let go. *Pop Song* is a book about love and about falling in love—with a place, or a painting, or a person—and the joy and terror inherent in the experience of that love. Plumbing the well of culture for clues and patterns about love and loss—from Agnes Martin's abstract paintings to James Turrell's transcendent light works, and Anne Carson's *Eros the Bittersweet* to Frank Ocean's *Blonde*—Pham writes of her youthful attempts to find meaning in travel, sex, drugs, and art, before sensing that she might need to turn her gaze upon herself. *Pop Song* is also a book about distances, near and far. As she travels from Taos, New Mexico, to Shanghai, China and beyond, Pham meditates on the miles we are willing to cover to get away from ourselves, or those who hurt us, and the impossible gaps that can exist between two people sharing a bed. *Pop Song* is a book about all the routes by which we might escape our own needs before finally finding a way home. There is heartache in these pages, but Pham's electric ways of seeing create a perfectly fractured portrait of modern intimacy that is triumphant in both its vulnerability and restlessness.

crush richard siken review: Poets & Writers, 2004

crush richard siken review: Tinderbox Lawn Carol Guess, 2008 Poetry. Set on the margins of Seattle, beneath bridges and on the banks of waterways, in strip clubs and flooded farmland, the prose poems in *TINDERBOX LAWN* illuminate the intersection of domesticity and bohemia, orthodoxy and passion. Each untitled block of prose constitutes a novel-in-miniature, with shadow characters and shards of plot. The intensity of Carol Guess's poems builds through lyrical language and recurring images, capturing the moment when the small mad heart at the center of things stalls mid-tick. This is such deep, rich writing. *TINDERBOX LAWN* feels like dreams you forgot as you walk through your day but it's your life. I mean we never think as deeply as we live and Carol Guess tries to braid those strands and succeeds. I love being in this work—Eileen Myles.

crush richard siken review: White Magic Elissa Washuta, 2021-04-27 Finalist for the PEN Open Book Award Longlisted for the PEN/Jean Stein Award A TIME, NPR, New York Public Library, Lit Hub, Book Riot, and Entropy Best Book of the Year Beguiling and haunting. . . . Washuta's voice sears itself onto the skin. —The New York Times Book Review Bracingly honest and powerfully affecting, *White Magic* establishes Elissa Washuta as one of our best living essayists. Throughout her life, Elissa Washuta has been surrounded by cheap facsimiles of Native spiritual tools and occult trends, “starter witch kits” of sage, rose quartz, and tarot cards packaged together in paper and plastic. Following a decade of abuse, addiction, PTSD, and heavy-duty drug treatment for a misdiagnosis of bipolar disorder, she felt drawn to the real spirits and powers her dispossessed and discarded ancestors knew, while she undertook necessary work to find love and meaning. In this collection of intertwined essays, she writes about land, heartbreak, and colonization, about life

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