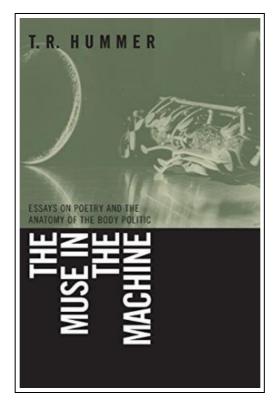
The Muse in the Machine: Essays on Poetry and the Anatomy of the Body Politic (Paperback)



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Reviews

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(Taylor Medhurst)

THE MUSE IN THE MACHINE: ESSAYS ON POETRY AND THE ANATOMY OF THE BODY POLITIC (PAPERBACK)



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University of Georgia Press, United States, 2006. Paperback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. Music, race, politics, and conscience - in these eight essays written over the span of a decade and a half, T. R. Hummer explains how, for him, such abiding concerns revolve around the practice of poetry and the evolution of a culturally responsible personal poetics. Hummer writes about the suicide of poet Vachel Lindsay, the culture wars at the National Endowment for the Arts, the 1991 Persian Gulf War, the divided soul of his native American South, and the salving, transcendent practice of musicianship. Inevitably entwined with a personal or cultural component, Hummer's criticism is thus grounded in experience that is always familiar and often straight to the heart in its rightness. In one of those statements of poetic purpose that goes hand in hand with a residency, guest editorship, or lecture tour, Hummer once wrote that poetry inhabits and enunciates an incommensurable zone between individual and collective, between body and body politic, an area very ill-negotiated by most of us most of the time. Our culture, with its emphasis on the individual mind and body, teaches us very little about how even to think about the nature of this problem. E pluribus unum is a smokescreen: what pluribus, what unum? And yet this phrase is an American mantra, as if it explained something. This is a quintessential Hummer moment: a writer has just given himself a good reason to quit. What Hummer knows must happen next is what The Muse in the Machine is all about.

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