



## Interviews and Encounters with Stanley Kunitz

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Although most denizens of libraries are more familiar with his name from the covers of various biographical dictionaries which he has edited, Stanley Kunitz has been a highly respected name in American poetry for many decades. Stanley Moss has gathered nineteen “encounters” with the poet in the years between 1968 and 1990, most of them interviews.

Because of his rare blend of candor and civility, Kunitz invariably makes an engaging interviewee. Many interesting facts emerge, often paradoxical. He claims to have no religion but thinks a great deal about God. A Jew, he has been much influenced by the Christian poetry of John Donne, George Herbert, and Gerard Manley Hopkins. He felt isolated in his youth but in his old age has numerous friends, many of them much younger poets. He was “moved” by T. S. Eliot in his youth but “resisted” him. He regards himself as an elegiac poet but one who also experiences and conveys rapture.

Belonging to no “school” of poetry, Kunitz has not been easily pigeonholed and thus has not been awarded a great deal of space in literary history, but he has attracted discerning critics, witness the essays by Michael Ryan and Susan Mitchell in this volume. Although this volume features the voice of Kunitz in conversation with admirers of his art and is best read in conjunction with an edition of his poems—the most comprehensive of which is *THE POEMS OF STANLEY KUNITZ, 1928-1978*—Moss has supplied a thirty-one-page appendix of poems discussed in the volume. Thus it serves nicely as an introduction to his poetry. The editor concludes with a selective bibliography of Kunitz’s work as poet, editor, essayist, and conversationalist.

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