



# Complete Minimal Poems

*Aram Saroyan*

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## Complete Minimal Poems Aram Saroyan

Poetry. Visual Poetry. Long-cherished in out-of-print editions, anthologies and text books, and more recently celebrated on the internet, Aram Saroyan's groundbreaking concrete and minimalist poems of the 1960s are gathered together here in a single, much-needed volume. COMPLETE MINIMAL POEMS includes the entire contents of Aram Saroyan (Random House, 1968), Pages (Random House, 1969), The Rest (Telegraph, 1971), as well as Saroyan's contribution, "Electric Poems," to the anthology All Stars (Goliard-Grossman, 1972), and a sequence, "Short Poems," which hasn't appeared previously. With ties to the work of such writers and artists as e.e. cummings, Andy Warhol, Gertrude Stein, Donald Judd, Ian Hamilton Finlay and Steve Reich, COMPLETE MINIMAL POEMS confirms Aram Saroyan's place among the most daring and engaging figures in modern poetry.

## Complete Minimal Poems Details

Date : Published July 1st 2007 by Ugly Duckling Presse (first published May 2007)

ISBN : 9781933254258

Author : Aram Saroyan

Format : Paperback 284 pages

Genre : Poetry, Language, Writing, United States

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# From Reader Review Complete Minimal Poems for online ebook

## Mark Hollingsworth says

Some good little poems.

Some fun play with sound:  
"corporate pirates"

Some interesting juxtaposition:  
a cartoon  
of  
energy

Some heightened images:  
"nnausea"

My favorite (probably because it relates to another book I'm reading):  
I leaps

through  
my eyes

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## Andrew says

some really great stuff in here. close to perfection but he doesn't take the minimalism far enough to enjoy just one word, or two words. sometimes the trickery (either with misspelling or punctuation) obscures the force of what one word can really be, and how it can be enough in itself. my favorite:

Not a  
cricket

ticks a  
clock

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## Adam says

I imagine the highest compliment an artist can receive is incredulosity. Creating a body of work that challenges the viewer's (or reader's or listener's, or whatever the case may be) understanding of art proves that an artist is, at the very least, being transgressive. And as we all know, progress is an inevitable symptom of transgression. Growth only occurs through conflict. Truth is only revealed at the cost of one's preconceived notions of the world. In this vein of thought, Aram Saroyan's Complete Minimal Poems chronicles the works of one of the most contentious and influential poets of the twentieth century.

Saroyan faced harsh criticism from artistically and politically conservative audiences in the Sixties and Seventies, culminating in an infamous flare-up over his poem "lighght," which in 1970 received a \$500 award from the National Endowment for the Arts. The poem, in its entirety, was the single word "lighght" smack dab in the center of a blank page. That poem--along with more than two hundred others--find home in this work, each as beguiling and playful as any other.

The problem with minimalism as an art form is that it tends to be difficult to convey intention to an audience. There is an unfortunate conflation in the public mind between minimalism and sloth: a canvas with a single vertical line of paint; a musical composition consisting of 273 uninterrupted seconds of pure silence; a poem consisting of a single word. Minimalist works try their hardest to hide all the technical ability and artistic motivation behind them. One can only imagine how many times Saroyan had to revise "Car Swerves, / Injures 11; / Driver Held" until it held as much emotional resonance as he could pack into six words. And it is a truly evocative, powerful poem by any standard.

The true genius of Saroyan's poems is his ability to reduce the image, object, or concept he wants to convey into its most skeletal elements, while leaving enough in for each poem to feel like it carries weight. In many ways he continues the tradition of the haiku, especially in works such as "something moving in the garden a cat" or "whistling in the street a car turning in the room ticking" where Saroyan elevates a mundane everyday moment into something timeless. His four-legged "m" poem hints at growth and evolution even within the context of a single (albeit entirely new) character. "night / so daylight" both asks and answers questions about the cyclical yet linear shape of time.

As with all art, one gets out of Saroyan's poems what one brings to Saroyan's poems. They are not all perfect, and some of them do seem lacking in resonance or at least too self-referential for anyone other than Saroyan to understand (the single-word poems "gum," "leukemia," and "Alice" come to mind). As I read through Complete Minimal Poems, though, I found myself laughing, brooding, and scratching my head in disbelief. In a word, incredulous.

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## Alex Wennerberg says

This is the first book of poetry that has really gotten me excited about poetry since I read tao lin's 'you are a little bit happier than i am', which is probably the book that inspired me to write poetry in the first place. Aram writes poems that feel new and fresh to me & capture exactly what I like about poetry (its ability to express feelings, using language, in ways that non-poetic language cannot do). I found him by googling "minimalist poetry" & in conjunction with Robert Lax, who I am currently reading and equally excited about.

If I listed all my favorite poems I would list like half the book. The three-word and two-word poems were some of my favorites, they told so little but enough that my mind created a coherent story or a powerful image after reading them. I liked "sky/every/day" "cat/book/city" and "ask/born/cigarette" especially. I think "something moving in the garden a cat" described a sensation that probably would have taken 3 times as many words to capture accurately in 1/3 as many words. I liked "ex- / track / coach / dies" & other extremely minimal ways that he depicted tragic events ("seek / air / tragedy / bodies"). These poems felt very emotional to me & seemed to provide a new way of looking at death/tragedy.

I found very few of Aram's poems to be bland or alien to me, with the exception of the more concrete or conceptual ones, e.g. where he lists off numbers or writes a word with a typo or a semicolon in it (or his most

famous poem, "light"). I didn't really like these poems at all, as they lack emotional content and to be purely conceptual: poems to be talked about and thought about but not felt.

This book of poetry also felt very empowering for me, I felt like it inspired me to write a lot of poems and write poems in a style that I haven't written in before. I highly recommend this if you are interested in minimalist poetry.

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### **Jeff Jackson says**

The best of these minimal poems are conceptual and linguistic masterpieces that deserve to be printed and tacked on the walls of any museum. But perhaps because of their conceptual nature, most of the poems either work brilliantly or fall flat, making the overall collection very hit or miss for me. Richard Hell's rave review in the NY Times provides examples of some of the best poems and more information on Saroyan's project. If you're at all intrigued, this is well worth a read. The book presents the poems thoughtfully and is a gorgeous object.

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### **Barry says**

A few of these poems are terrific.

But I wish the book didn't end with an idyllic vision of a bird flying by, kids screaming, and his wife doing the dishes.

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### **Özgür Da? says**

Yay?nevi bu kitaba 15 lira etiket koymu?... Her gün bir sayfas?n? okusa ki?i okumalara doymamaz san?yorum. "Yazmak Ontolojik Fark?ndal???n En Hacimli Halidir" mottosuyla yay?n yapan Kült Ne?riyat, ayakta alk???l?yorum sizi...

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### **mwpm says**

The *Complete Minimal Poems* brings together poems from Saroyan's various small press publications, including: *Aram Saroyan*, *The Beatles*, *coffee coffee*, *Electric Poems*, *Gertrude Stein*, *I Am Rose*, *In, My Mummy's Dead*, *Pages*, and *The Rest*

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### **Regulator says**

Ah minimalism. This is a quick, enjoyable a read. Some small moments in this book can be frustrating if you're looking for meaning, but there are a number of great haiku-like images and thoughts, and many funny poems in here. Overall, it's worth reading if you love poetry and want to see where the extremes of minimalism can take you.

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## Jordan says

A coworker seemed frustrated after flipping through. "How can a poem be one word?" It's a joy to read this book. Small moments of beauty and playfulness. The printed version of saying a word over and over until it doesn't mean anything, or spelling it in strange ways to say it new ways. A book I'll be revisiting often.

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## Atte says

Poika naputteli (säästävaisesti) sanoja paperille 1960-luvulla. Osa näistä on melko nerokkaita.

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## Eddie Watkins says

One might be tempted (as I was) to forego buying this book as it can easily be read in the store during half a lunchbreak.

But being an inveterate booknerd book junkie I forewent 8-9 minimal lunches to plop down the purchase price. Then I indulged in a maximal lunch to celebrate (collards & mac & cheese) - dyspepsia from a soul food truck...

It can also easily be read at one's desk at work, thereby lightening up that windowless place by clearing the mind and populating it with crickets; creating large inner spaces with perfectly formed small singing things.

Some clarifying word pills:

### ***LYRIC***

*I'm a cardboard poet.*

*I eat rice.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*a cartoon*

*of*

*energy*

\* \* \* \* \*

*my knees are in my knees*  
*my eyes are in my eyes*

\* \* \* \* \*

*black salad*

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## Valerie says

The only poem of Aram Saroyan I read before this book is his famous poem, eyeye. I think concrete poems are fun, so I was happy to pick up this book at the Massachusetts Poetry Festival this year. Saroyan is kind of the representative for concrete poetry, or at least the most famous. I would like to look into the genre more and see if I can find modern poets doing this.

I zipped through the book quickly since there were just one or two words on most of the pages. I don't think all the poems were even in quality or creativity. The most charming poems really stick with me more than I thought such short poetry would.

My favorite poems in the book: (I am just writing the poems since they are only one or a few words; each poem is on its own line)

Typewriter Kittens

Shakespeare!

eyeye

nnausea

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## Jeffrey says

This was one of my favorite recent book discoveries. Each of the little poems in this book is no more than a few words long, but using a variety of techniques, such as misspelling, repetition, unusual juxtapositions, interesting typography (such the concrete poem), Saroyan turns each little poem into a suggestive little gem worthy of savoring, like a rich piece of chocolate in your mouth.

I kept this book by my bed for well over a year, picking it up and enjoying these little word play poems a few

poems at a time.

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## **Peter Landau says**

Poems as image. Poems as play. Poems that are funny and moving, sometimes almost off the page. These works transported me. They changed my perspective, my perceptions, for the better. What a difference a letter makes when there are only four of them. How strange a page is when its treated as environment.

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