

One of the most popular and influential poets writing today, Sharon Olds commands large and diverse audiences. Focusing always on the personal, the interior, Olds' poetry ranges from the pleasures of the body to the anguish of individuals caught up in the cataclysms of twentieth-century history. Among her many honors are the Lamont Poetry Prize, the National Book Critics Circle Award, and the Harriet Monroe Poetry Award. She was recently named New York State Poet.

## Sharon Olds A Poetry Reading

### Sex Without Love

How do they do it, the ones who make love without love? Beautiful as dancers, gliding over each other like ice-skaters over the ice, fingers hooked inside each other's bodies, faces red as steak, wine, wet as the children at birth whose mothers are going to give them away. How do they come to the come to the come to the God come to the still waters, and not love the one who came there with them, light rising slowly as steam off their joined skin? These are the true religious, the purists, the pros, the ones who will not accept a false Messiah, love the priest instead of the God. They do not mistake the lover for their own pleasure, they are like great runners: they know they are alone with the road surface, the cold, the wind, the fit of their shoes, their over-all cardiovascular health---just factors, like the partner in the bed, and not the truth, which is the single body alone in the universe against its own best time.

*The Dead and the Living*, Knopf, 1984

## Sharon Olds

*Poet Laureate of New York State; Graduate Program in Creative Writing, New York University*

**October 8, 1998**

Thursday 7:30 pm

Auditorium, Room 2100, Music Bldg.

1114 West Nevada Street, Urbana

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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