

JOHN ASHBERY

b. July 28, 1927

POET

His Pulitzer Prize-winning poem “Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror,” which also won the National Book Award and the National Critics Circle Award, is unique for its triple prize status.

*“My poetry is disjunct,
but then so is life.”*

John Ashbery is one of the most successful 20th century poets. He has won almost every major American literary award, including the 1975 Pulitzer Prize for poetry.

Ashbery graduated from Harvard University, where he studied English and served on the editorial board of the Harvard Advocate. He received his master's degree from Columbia University. After graduating, Ashbery spent three years in publishing before moving to Paris on a Fulbright scholarship.

Returning to the U.S. in 1957, Ashbery attended graduate classes at New York University. Thereafter, he returned to Paris, where he supported himself as an editor. He eventually moved back to the U.S. to become the executive editor of ARTNews magazine.

Ashbery's success began with frequent publication of his poems in magazines such as Furioso and Poetry New York.

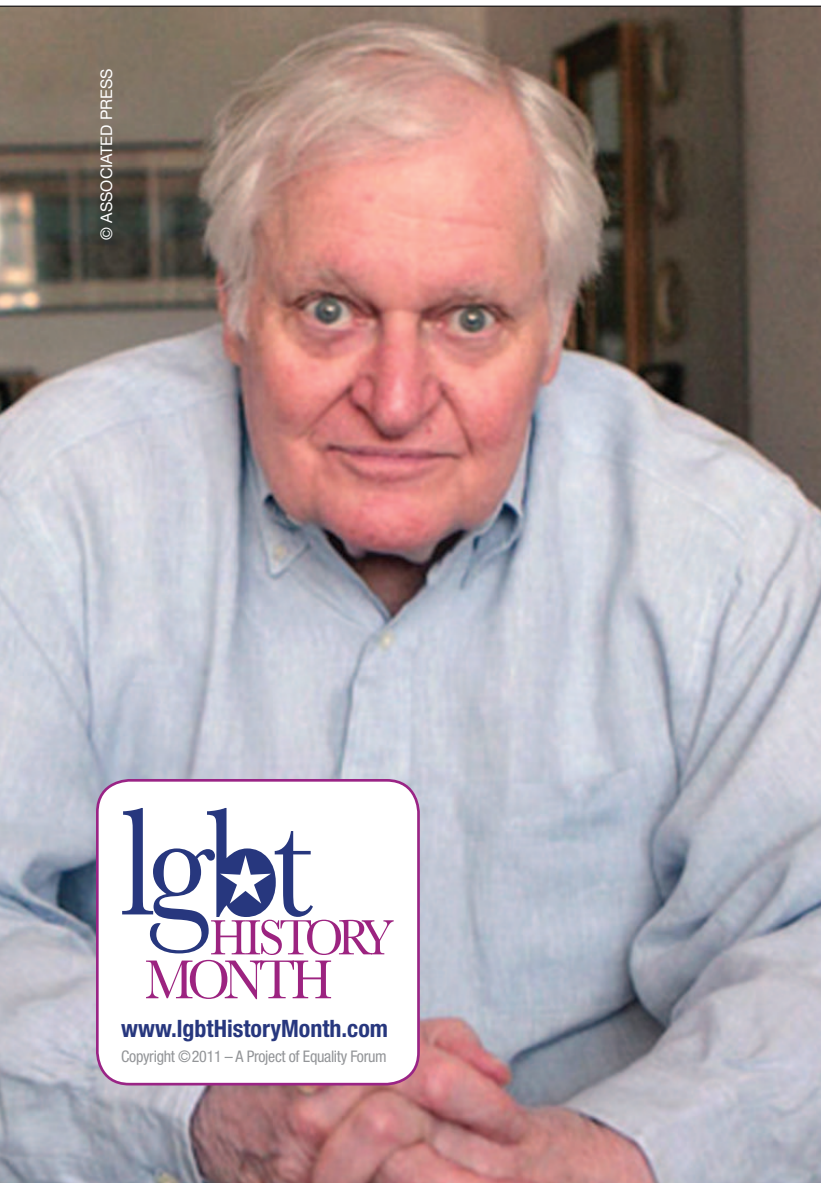
While in France, his book “Some Trees” won the Yale Younger Poet's Prize. He has won many awards, including the Bollingen Prize and the McArthur Foundation's “Genius Award.”

His Pulitzer Prize-winning poem “Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror,” which also won the National Book Award and the National Critics Circle Award, is unique for its triple prize status. The poem pulls together his favored themes: creating poetry and the influence of visual arts on his work.

Ashbery's career has been marked by controversy. Response to his poetry ranges from praise for his brilliant expressionism and use of language to condemnation for his work's nonsensical and elusive nature.

A prolific writer, he has published over 20 books of poetry, beginning with “Tourandot and Other Poems.” His work has been compared to modernist painters such as Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning. Critics assert that he is trying to translate visual modern art into written language.

Since 1974, he has supported himself through teaching positions, the last of which was as the Charles P. Stevens, Jr. Professor of Language and Literature at Bard College. He lives in upstate New York, where he continues to write poetry.



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