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Sommario/riassunto	Poetry doesn't matter to most people, observes Jay Parini at the opening of this book. But, undeterred, he commences a deeply felt meditation on poetry, its language and meaning, and its power to open minds and transform lives. By the end of the book, Parini has recovered a truth often obscured by our clamorous culture: without poetry, we live only partially, not fully conscious of the possibilities that life affords. Poetry indeed matters. A gifted poet and acclaimed teacher, Parini begins by looking at defenses of poetry written over the centuries. He ponders Aristotle, Horace, and Longinus, and moves on through Sidney, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Eliot, Frost, Stevens, and others. Parini examines the importance of poetic voice and the mysteries of metaphor. He argues that a poet's originality depends on a deep understanding of the traditions of political poetry, nature poetry, and religious poetry. Writing with a casual grace, Parini avoids jargon

and makes his case in concise, direct terms: the mind of the poet supplies a light to the minds of others, kindling their imaginations, helping them to live their lives. The author's love of poetry suffuses this insightful book-a volume for all readers interested in a fresh introduction to the art that lies at the center of Western civilization.
