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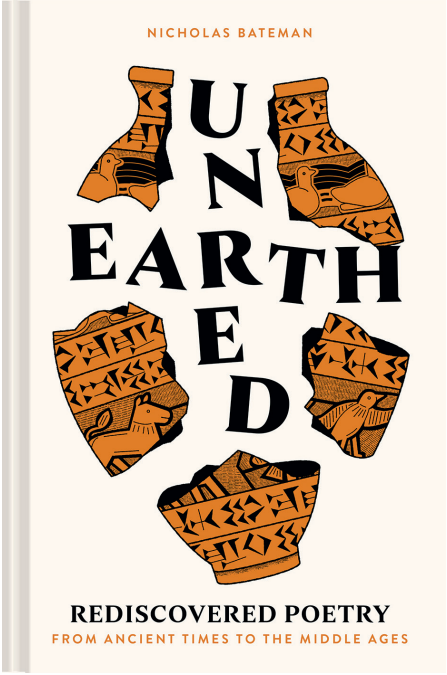
PRESS RELEASE

Unearthed

Rediscovered poetry from ancient times to the middle ages



ISBN 9781837330058
RRP £20 • HB
Published by Batsford
1 October 2026

by Nicholas Bateman

Lost, broken, forgotten, rediscovered: poetry across 35 centuries.

The poems in this book nearly didn't get into print - every one of them was lost to history at some point in time. But, due to the efforts of archaeologists and historical researchers, they were all rediscovered.

Arranged chronologically and spanning 35 centuries from the very earliest times to the advent of the printing press, this beautiful anthology presents 70 poems, ranging from lengthy epics to mere fragments and snippets, that have survived against the odds and live to speak to us today.

You'll meet a Sumerian priestess writing about war in 2300 BCE (possibly the earliest poem in existence), a grief-stricken Greek girl remembering her childhood friend, an Arab princess from 11th-century Spain embroidering verses on her robes, a lonely Irish monk addressing his cat, and a Byzantine court official complaining about mice. The poems encompass passionate love lyrics, laments for vanished youth, elegies for deceased friends and lovers, epics about death and destruction, and odes to fresh fruit and vegetables.

Alongside the poems are fascinating stories of how they were rediscovered: written on scraps of papyrus found in rubbish heaps, on sherds of pottery, inscribed on 60-foot statues or 1-inch finger rings.

Nicholas Bateman is an archaeologist who worked for the Museum of London for many years, and worked as Site Director for excavations of the Roman amphitheatre discovered below Guildhall. He is the author of over 30 academic articles, papers and books, and is a member of the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists and a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London. He lives in Kent.

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