

“Clearly and nimbly written, John Fitch’s richly informed book is a welcome and welcoming addition to the literature of poetry and science. Anyone interested in this topic will find what Fitch has to say nourishing, provocative, and rewarding.”

—**Robert Crawford**, Bishop Wardlaw Professor of Poetry, University of St Andrews; editor of *Contemporary Poetry and Contemporary Science* (2006).

“In this novel and accessible book, John G. Fitch makes a clear and uncluttered case for the truth-telling of poetry and its entanglements with the sciences. In offering numerous engaging examples of the falsehood of thinking of poetry and science as distinct and separate, Fitch does the field of literature and science a service. That he aims his work at a broader audience is to be welcomed.”

—**Martin Willis**, Chair of the British Society for Literature and Science (2015–18); Professor of English, Cardiff University; author of *Literature and Science: Readers’ Guides to Essential Criticism* (2014).

In *The Poetry of Knowledge*, John Fitch brings together literary history, poetics and modern science to argue that poetry can help us to apprehend the world around us, at once communicating, crafting and interpreting knowledge. Through poised and generous readings of poets from Lucretius to Wendell Berry, he shows how poetry brings the life of the world home, challenging mechanistic thinking and environmental exploitation through making common cause with science in all its rich complexity.

—**John Holmes**, Professor of Victorian Literature and Culture at the University of Birmingham, author of *Darwin’s Bards* (2009) and *The Pre-Raphaelites and Science* (2018), and editor of *Science in Modern Poetry: New Directions* (2012).

This book argues that poetry is compatible with systematic knowledge including science, and indeed inherent in it; it also discusses particular poems that engage with such knowledge, including those of Lucretius, Vergil, and Vita Sackville-West. The book argues that there are substantial similarities between knowledge-making and poetry-making, for example in their being shaped by language, including metaphor, and in their seeking unity in the world, under the impulse of eros and pleasure. The book also discusses some of the obstacles to a ‘poetry of knowledge’, including scientific objectivism, the Kantian tradition in philosophy, and the separation of the ‘two cultures’ in our academic and intellectual institutions. The book is accessible to all those interested in the issue of the relationship of poetry and of science in contemporary culture.

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John G. Fitch is Professor Emeritus, University of Victoria. His publications focus on the Roman writer Seneca, including a two-volume text and translation of Seneca’s dramatic works for the Loeb Classical Library (revised edition 2018). He farmed sheep on Galiano Island, and published a book of poems on wildflowers of the British Columbia coast (2013).

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