



# Nothing by Design

*Mary Jo Salter*

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**Nothing by Design** Mary Jo Salter

A beautiful collection of verse—both light and dark, elegiac and affirmative—from one of our most admired poets.

The title *Nothing by Design* is taken from Salter's villanelle "Complaint for Absolute Divorce," in which we're asked to entertain the thought of a no-fault universe. The wary search for peace, personal and public, is a constant theme in poems as varied as "Our Friends the Enemy," about the Christmas football match between German and British soldiers in 1914; "The Afterlife," in which Egyptian tomb figurines labor to serve the dead; and "Voice of America," where Salter returns to the Saint Petersburg of her exiled friend, the late Joseph Brodsky. A section of charming light verse serves as counterpoint to another series entitled "Bed of Letters," in which Salter addresses the end of a long marriage. Artfully designed, with a highly intentional music, these poems movingly give form to the often unfathomable, yet very real, presence of nothingness and loss in our lives.

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