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The Poetic Life of J. Robert Oppenheimer, Father of the Bomb
LSU Press to Publish New Collection from Kelly Cherry

“Robert Oppenheimer was a complex human being. No biography yet written comes even close to this elegant skein of poems in capturing his life and character.”—Richard Rhodes, author of the Pulitzer Prize–winning *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*

Baton Rouge—*Quartet for J. Robert Oppenheimer*, to be published by LSU Press in February 2017, records in poetry the life and times of one of America’s best-known scientists, the father of the atomic bomb who later lobbied for containment of nuclear weaponry. In brief, elegant stanzas, Kelly Cherry examines Oppenheimer’s inspirations, dreams, and values, visiting the events, places, and people that inspired him or led him to despair. She finds his place among scientists of his own time, such as Alan Turing and Albert Einstein, as well as his connections with historical and mythological figures from John Donne to Persephone.

“Of course he had blood on his hands. Who did not?” says Cherry, in “The Nature of War.” Again and again in the course of this remarkable poem, Cherry’s narration of Oppenheimer’s life compels her readers to contemplate the vagaries of science, guilt, and our responsibilities to each other.

Kelly Cherry is the author of over twenty-five books of fiction, poetry, and nonfiction, ten chapbooks, and translations of two classical plays. She is Eudora Welty Professor Emerita of English and Evjue-Bascom Professor Emerita in the Humanities at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She and her husband live in Virginia.

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Poetry

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