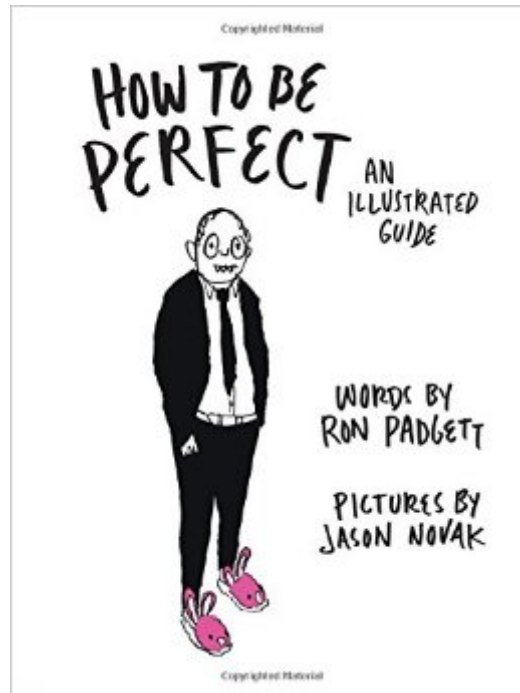


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# How To Be Perfect: An Illustrated Guide



## Synopsis

• Make eye contact with a tree. • Do not practice cannibalism. • Wear comfortable shoes. • Sing, every once in a while. • In later life, become a mystic. • Offbeat, warm, and funny, Ron Padgett's prescriptions for human perfection springs to life in Jason Novak's cartoons; a delightful match-up of sensibilities. And remember: "Don't give advice." Ron Padgett's *How Long* was a Pulitzer Prize finalist in poetry and his *Collected Poems* won the William Carlos Williams Award from the Poetry Society of America and the Los Angeles Times Book Prize for the best poetry book of 2013. His work has been translated into eighteen languages. Jason Novak is a cartoonist whose work has appeared in the *New Yorker*, the *Paris Review* and the *Believer* among other places. He lives in Oakland, California.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Not everybody likes poetry. Sadly, many people were taught in school that poetry is Complex and is Too Deep for Anyone Other than Literature Professors to Contemplate. Very sad. Do you feel like that? Do you feel reading poetry is akin to reading in another language? This little book could change that. Padgett is a Poet for the People. Billy Collins-ish. Readable. Yet thoughtful. I ran across Padgett a few weeks ago via Garrison Keillor's *Writer's Almanac*. Here's just a tiny excerpt from this book's title poem, *How to Be Perfect*: Get some sleep. Eat an orange every morning. Be friendly. It will help make you happy. Hope for everything. Expect nothing. Take care of things close to home first. Straighten up your room before you save the world. Then save the world....

This for That What will I have for breakfast? I wish I had some plums like the ones in Williams's poem. He apologized to his wife for eating them but what he did not do was apologize to those who would read his poem and also not be able to eat them. That is why I like his poem when I am not hungry. Right now I do not like him or his poem. This is just to say that.-----superb! the great doctor-poet lives!

Well, it helps to be Ron Padgett to write a perfect book. Only a profound balance can produce such wheeling, such elegant levity, such pithy silliness. The long poems in this various, rich collection are astonishing, their invention never brags about itself, their goofiness is always paralleled with a deep humanity and underthrum of mortality. I think there should be a statue of Ron Padgett as big as the Statue of Liberty um somewhere!

Poems to make you think. Poems to make you laugh -- often both at once. Dry and weary, this poet -- but somehow also hopeful (maybe it's because his is "the little muse / the smaller than usual muse" ?). These are poems Ecclesiastes would have read over a whiskey on ice after a day of declaring the world vanity -- and would have agreed with Padgett, (from the title poem, "How to Be Perfect") -- "Do not go crazy a lot. It's a waste of time."

Full disclosure: it's illustrated by a friend. This book is wonderful. It sways from the "I know I try so hard at that" to the humorous, to the world opening with deeply enjoyable rhythm. "Look a tree in the eye." "Do not exclaim Isn't Technology Wonderful." "Learn how to stretch your muscles and stretch them every day." "If someone murders your child, get a shotgun and blow their head off." This book is the kind of delight you'll keep at hand for flipping through at odd moments. I know I'll be rereading it very often.

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