

In Central Park

Father Beneto reads
the Bible on a bench,
bows his head,
his prayer a lit match
at a private concert,

pigeons, the original
slam dancers,
around his shiny
black shoes,

a skaterboy veering by,
his NYU sweatshirt
a prayer
his body wears
against late October.

-- Ken Pobo

Celeste Asters

They're purplish turtles
sticking bloomheads
out to get sun. Autumn
withdraws leaves from

the First National Bank
of Maples as celeste
asters send purplish
signals deep into the sky.
They're utterly, utterly
nude. It's true,

the moon leers at them,
but they carry on
even under pinpricks
of rain.

-- Ken Pobo

Wisdom

The wise one sits alone and knows
The couple's attempts at dialogue
Are soliloquies.

He knows that when their heads
Nod in understanding,
There is no understanding.

Yet the couple is not sad as he is
Who understands they do not
Understand each other.

-- Duane Locke

Air

In the last month of my fiftieth year I turned to air, not air we breathe but air we are, not the moon was the sliverest of a sliver in air we breathe but air we were before lung and nose and we had no need of air as breath, not bird as shadow against the stars in air we breathe and the moon the sliverest of a sliver but air we were when air we breathe had yet to gain this use, to this air I turned in the autumn of my fiftieth year, to air we were, to air as air before the air was air I turned, to sudden memory I turned, not memory of then but memory of now, not all the moons I've seen sliver to the sliverest of a sliver in a necklace of memories but to memory as memory when there was no then to remember, not all my lungs of fish and toad and fox and wolverine, of butterfly and flower in one abandoned memory in pursuit of another but into sudden memory that there are no memories and that the air we breathe is not the air we are, is not the air that air was then before the air was air, into this memory I turned in the last month of my fiftieth year in the air we breathe with bird as shadow against the stars I breathe and the moon the sliverest of a sliver I breathe for I am air now and not my lung or toe or nose or arm or elbow, not a name, a name, a name only air now, but not the air we breathe but air that see and yes I now it should be sees but this is not the kind of air that take its verb in the third person singular because it's not third, it's not person, and it is certainly not singular, so it is the air that see, not the air we breathe or fall or rise through, or that heat and cold can whip to frenzied storm that rearranges even small cities at large expense to tax payers, not that kind of air at all, but air that see, not even air that saw for there is no then in this air, it is air that see, it is the air we were before the air was air and all we did was see, when all the air was see, when all the world was see, long before lungs and toads and wolverines and the moon was the sliverest of a sliver and the bird just a quick shadow against the stars and then gone again against the black.

-- Ulf Ronnquist

REVIEWS

Robert ToTeras

Five Bucks

www.toteras.com

Some fine, aggressive, pointed singer-songwriter acoustic pop on this CD. It's a shortie—a mere 5 songs, but a good sampling of ToTeras's talent. He has the gift of the strum—the tightness of a Richie Havens-- and a soulful, intense voice.

"Sense of You", recorded live in a coffee-house setting, is the feature track, and it's a blistering cut. ToTeras blends styles nicely: bluesy, a bit jazzy, with plenty of pop flourishes and enough edge to keep things interesting. This guy would be an entertaining live act, I'm sure.

-- J. Esch



Marc Awodey

Telegrams from the Psych Ward, and other poems

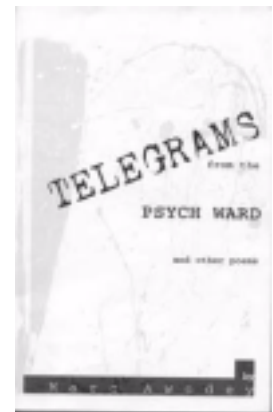
102 pages
W.P.C. -- Minimal Press
PO Box 114
Warner, NH 03278
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Vermont poet, Marc Awodey, who's been making a bit of a name for himself with his "poetry machines" (recycled cigarette vending machines with poetry booklets in them) has released his first volume of poetry. It's an encrusted, imagery-laqueered, sensitive book, wrestling with madness, social dislocation, and an always keen attenuation to the rhythms of nature humming and rattling along with the turbines of psychological struggle.

The title piece is a vision of the psychward from the inside out—jambles of sketches and snapshots that say a lot with a little. Most of the other pieces are lyrics with a careful attention paid to nature imagery and the interaction of "man-in-environment."

This is not easy reading. Something more than a short attention span is required. You need to have patience to dwell in these poems and let them envelop you in their spun thread of words. In most cases, the patience is worth the effort—Awodey's poetic vision is meditative, quietly troubled, dense with suggestion.

-- J. Esch



Contributors

Jim Esch founded Sparks, edits Sparks, and sometimes emits sparks. His most recent web project is ALT-TAB. find it as <http://eserver.org/sparks/alt-tab.html>

Duane Locke has a Ph. D. in Renaissance Literature, lives alone and officially unemployed, in an old, two-story, decaying, inherited house in the sunny Tampa slums. Duane spends his time painting, or writing poems, or reading postmodern philosophy, or listening to old operas. He currently has a one man art show at the pyramid gallery in Tampa, and has over 2,000 poems published in 500 print magazines such APR, Nation, Literary Quarterly, Black Moon, Bitter Oleander. His 14th and latest book of poems is WATCHING WISTERIA. To order see www.vidapublishing.com or call Small Press Distributors, 1-800-869-7553.

Kenneth Pobo's most recent chapbook is CICADAS IN THE APPLE TREES from Palanquin Press (1998). His work appears in: COLORADO REVIEW, NIMROD, MUDFISH, SOUTHERN OCEAN REVIEW, FORPOETRY, and elsewhere. His interests include collecting obscure 1960s pop 45s, gardening, and cats. His favorite novel is BUDDENBROOKS by Thomas Mann.

Ulf Ronnquist was raised by trolls in Northern Sweden. He left Sweden in 1969 for Africa and then England. In 1979 he moved to New York for a year, and since then has been living in Southern California, where makes a living with Lucent Technologies as a tech support guy. Ulf writes Lays and Tales (mainly Tales nowadays) every free moment he gets. He's had many works published online over the last few years. See <http://rowansongs.com>