

Wilderness House Literary Review 2/2

Shadow People: Poems by Molly Lynn Watt

(Ibbetson Street Press- 2006)

<http://www.lulu.com/content/596300>

Review by Doug Holder

Watt is kind of a flesh-and-blood monument in the Boston area, totally involved with the poetic life there, but she reads like some kind of young world-traveller soaked in world-literature, concentrating especially on the ephemerality of human existence. As in this in Memoriam poem titled simply "Margie" (1916-1999): "It is always spring where she sits in her chair/under Monet's blue sky and fields of tulips/ Her fragile body bends over the nailclippers.../shaking/both hands shaking...." (p.25)

Unexpected poems here about the Yup'ik Indians in Alaska, the Mendenhall Glacier and the Tlingit Indians (again Alaska), Central Park in NYC during the winter, street life in Boston-Cambridge, everything always with a sense of transience, everything evaporating, vanishing away, even when she writes about the year she was born, 1938:

"That bloody year of 1938 when I was born.../Nazis carried out pogroms against the Jewish Born.../Storm troopers smashed synagogues and shops and homes/Time named Hitler man of the year...." ("1938," p. 11).

At the same time that she's lamenting the shortness of life, swirling in memories of lost-time, she preaches deliciously Debussyan delicatessen on grasping the Here and Now:

“...Wear a crown of daisies/Build a fire on sand.../Listen for the peepers/Wait for fireflies in the meadow.” (“Abandon Your Shoes,” p.51). A living classic.