

Wilderness House Literary Review 2/4

Reviewed by Mike Amado

"The Sea Never Drowns"

by Jason Heroux

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Surrealism enters reality and real life trips on a rug pulled from under by invisible hands. This was my initial impression of "The Sea Never Drowns", the second collection by Canadian Poet Jason Heroux. These poems are full with observations of daily routine and reflective ruminations. The speaker is always at the center of the viewing, peering forward; past the common veil of life and revolving 360 degrees like a beacon amid a sea that never drowns. It's not often I can blend the title of a book I'm reviewing into the review itself!

To be honest, I enjoyed Heroux's "The Sea Never Drowns", not only for its catch-you-off-guard-in-a-good-way images and its thought-firing style but for the surrealism that these latter two create. Surreal poetry always produces chuckles for me, I'm like a kid hearing a dirty joke for the first time. More so, I enjoy the 'turning the world on its head' aspect of surreal poetry as it petitions: Imagine a world where The poems in "Sea" do this with a wise child vigor. There is a fresh wit, (fresh as in new and not sarcastic), through out. The poem, "Codeine" speaks for itself:

"The Moonlight shines on the wall
showing blank slides
of vacations it never went on."

Heroux, through his imagery is evident to have a third eye working overtime or just a hyperactive imagination. Which is great to read these days. Cryptic without being obtuse, inventive without being MFA obscure. The following are just a few of Heroux's extended images that got me:

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"The clouds overhead look like blank crumpled up suicide notes."
("Octoberland"), "The other day the sun / broke its tooth / gnawing / on a
tough/ speck of dust."
("Rue de la Quarantine"),
The tiny stars / reflected in puddles / look dirty as vitamins / fallen under
the fridge."
("On This Street").

Back in college ,I had a Creative Writing instructor that would never stop asking us about our image choices: "What do YOU mean by that? What is it's true relevance to YOU and to the poem? - If she read Heroux's "The Sea Never Drowns" she just might seek other employment!

There is the themes of time and seasonal reflection found in "Sea". Heroux takes us from autumn, to winter and to summer his seasonal poems. In "Remember", Heroux begins:

"Don't forget the bright summer afternoons:
the clock hands pick the hours pockets,
last year, a decade ago, in another lifetime
..."

"The Sea Never Drowns" is right up the alley for buffs of the sensible and the off-the-wall. And readers who like the everyday shook up.

This chapbook of twenty poems is worth the read and many re-reads.

Mike Amado is a reviewer for the Ibbetson Street Blog, a Bagelbard, and a performance poet from Plymouth, Massachusetts. Noted for performing lyrical tomes attuned to the social and the spiritual. Amado has featured at over ten various venues in the Massachusetts and Rhode Island areas. His first book is entitled "Poems: Unearthed from Ashes"