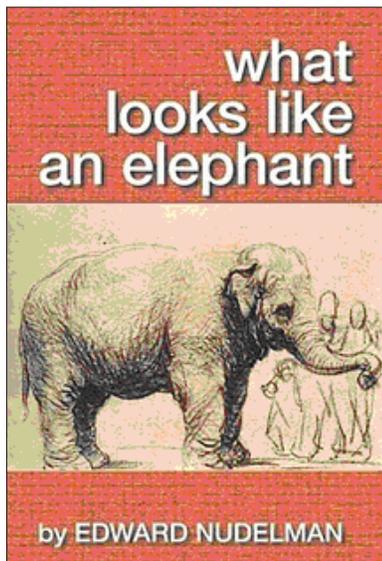


Review of "what looks like an elephant" by Edward Nudelman



Review of "what looks like an elephant" by Edward Nudelman, LummoX Press, PO Box 5301, San Pedro, CA 90733, www.lummoX-press.com, 113 pages, \$15

Review by Barbara Bialick

A good poet tends to have a keen eye for observation, irony and detail, metaphysics and philosophy, so it should be no surprise when a scientist poet arrives on the small press scene with his first "full-length" book, "what looks like an elephant". While the first thing I think of when a writer uses the symbol of an elephant, is the republican party, the book doesn't go too heavily into politics. Rather, one gets intrigued by the lingo he uses for some of his images, that of a noted and scientifically published biolo-

gist living in the Boston area, a published poet, too.

For example, in "Linear Equations" he writes, "The volume of air in a cave is greater than all its parts./Ask a spelunker to differentiate light's vector./Follow that course. Graph the activity of a winter bird/as a function of ambient temperature/...You should be dead, but you aren't. Graph that."

Or examine a less dense, poem, "Arrival": "Who can tell a gnat from a mosquito, unless/blood is spilled? Outside, a dog wants in./Inside, a soul wears slippers and sips iced tea./...Nobody here remembers the Vietnam war/but they will not easily forget this one." But what war is that?

A poet is a poet, I believe, but how often do poets start out, "I was splicing a gene/when Thayer walked in..." He has all sorts of tools and numbers and colleagues ready to mine for poetry, yet he is not bound by them. "If the fear of God/is the beginning of wisdom,/ why am I so ignorant?" ("Notes from an Ill-kept Journal")

Edward Nudelman's first book of poetry, "Night Fires" was published in 2009 by OSU Press. Some of the journals he has published in include "The Atlanta Review", "Chiron Review" the "Orange Room Review" and many others. He is a noted cancer research biologist with "over 60 published papers in top-tier journals." He has also published two books on Jessie Willcox Smith, an American illustrator (Pelican Publishing, 1989, 1990). He is a native of Seattle who lives "just north of Boston with his wife, Susan, and their Golden Retriever, Sofie."