

**Almond Town: Poems by Margaret Young**



**Almond Town: Poems by Margaret Young.** (Bright Hills Press 94 Church Street POBOX 193 Treadwell, NY.) <http://www.brighthillpress.org> \$16.

*Review by Doug Holder*

Margaret Young, a fellow faculty member at Endicott College in Beverly, Mass. can define with a skillful selection of words the worlds of sadness and gladness. She can marvel at her youth, but at the same time see the blush turn to a bloom, and foresee its preordained wilt.

I am most struck by her poems about her days in a theatrical troupe she formed decades ago. Here she captures the visceral feel of being young, creative, and supremely alive—but still with a gimlet eye toward the future. Case in point: her poem “Theatrical Residency, Pennsylvania Mining Town,” concerns her life as an actor in a down-at-the-heels burg:

“Knelling in the bingo hall  
smudges tights with cigarette ash:  
this is a church but I’m down  
here to rehearse the Wacko Song  
as Prince the Wonderdog or plead  
that Capulet not marry me to Paris  
and its old nunnery next door  
is where I knelt once just  
inside the entrance to my small  
pink room to suck my lover  
off: when you’re twenty-five  
you think your knees and love  
will last forever so you run  
up and down slag heaps  
in ten dollar sneakers, each tree  
younger than you, and back  
through street of this slow-  
dying town where recorded  
Bells wake us every blessed day.”

I loved the image of a young woman running, and running by even

## Wilderness House Literary Review 6/2

younger trees. Fleeting youth framed by a strip of seminal trees-- now why couldn't I think of that!

And in her poem "Movie Set, Pittsburgh" she show us the high holy in the lowly pedestrian:

"Waiting for fake rain  
again  
we pull blossoms off  
the parking lot's  
one  
skinny tree."

**Highly Recommended.**