

The Underwater Typewriter
By Marc Zegans
Pelekinesis Press

Review by Meghan Guidry

Charting the Depths – A Review of Marc Zegans' The Underwater Typewriter

Poets who are capable of fearlessly engaging with the sting of absence are rare, and in his new collection *The Underwater Typewriter*, Marc Zegans' has proven that he is in that select few. The collection is visually lush and carefully crafted, the mark of a poet who is deeply attuned to the undercurrents of the world as it is both experienced and imagined.

Stylistically, Zegans draws from the American Beat Poets and British Romanticism to shape an immersive poetic landscape simultaneously luminous and lonely. He is fearless with language, weaving luxurious description into every line of text—yet Zegans knows that compelling poetry needs more than description alone. What makes *The Underwater Typewriter* truly alluring is the poet's clear vision and interlocking themes.

Human engagement and connection is a negative condition of survival in Zegans' poetic environment. Without it, we perish. This is the axiom of Zegans' work: The whiplash anxiety between grasping for connection and the moments of grace when it's obtained.

Zegans' speakers' voices are at once wise and terrified, the latter because of the former. Understanding the importance of skin, of smile, of safe silence between self and other, Zegans' poetic avatars turn the world for authenticity, and for meaningful connections to place, to time, and most importantly, to people.

Absence and distance are tangible beings in Zegans' work. These are no less important, and no less real, than the speakers themselves. They are the tactile gulfs separating us from each other, whether by circumstance or design. Zegans both maps and mitigates these gulfs, charting the places where two souls press against the shared distance between them.

*Imagine two perfect absences
separated by interval
un-reckoned by the cycles of light.*

(from "The Reunion of Darkness")

Zegans charts these distances not through measurement, but by artifact, by what he pulls from the depths of the spaces between us, executed expertly in poems such as "Salvage" and "Hacking"



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*Yet we haul and fondle worn bits, gauging
texture and mass, function and fit, and loss
holes and breakage, sometimes signifying.*

(from "Salvage")

*Air rises between me
and the coat, stained
orange. What does
it say about me
that I wear this pen
splotted relic
out and about?*

(from "Hacking")

Zegans doesn't dwell where life dramatically ruptures; instead he rests at the jarring moments when, in the ordinariness of our everyday habits, we are suddenly and inextricably reminded of the abyss lurking just beyond the mundane.

Zegans also brings illusion to the forefront as an incarnation of the fantastic and as a condition of human existence. If illusions of self and meaning separate us from each other, then this poet strives for an inroad that is tangible and sacred in the overwhelming weight of our multitudes of masks.

As if every part must be a sign post

*A ballyhoo for that which isn't there
She'd come quieter, drawing my hand*

(from "drawing")

Zegans is at his best when he, as Helene Cixous wrote, "writes by the light of the axe." His language is vivid, colorful, and sensory, but it is the moments he speaks unadorned that truly sing, the moments in which he bravely confronts the reader and dares us to know him:

*I cannot raise the strength
to summon the day dream
that allowed me know
the world without border*

(from "perchance")

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The Underwater Typewriter isn't merely a collection of poems. It is an assembly of artifacts dragged from the depths of human relationship and heart, laid bare to turn, to witness, and ultimately, to love.

The Underwater Typewriter is published by Pelekinesis Press, and is available for pre-order here: http://pelekinesis.com/catalog/marc_zegans-the_underwater_typewriter.html