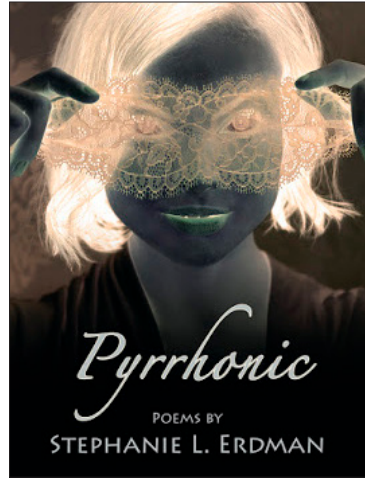


Pyrrhonic
Poems By
by Stephanie L. Erdman
Dos Madres press Inc.
Copyright 2017 Stephanie Erdman
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price given



Review by Zvi A. Sesling

In the world of experimental poetry there are many variations of the forms experimental poetry takes. Certainly Stephanie Erdman's *Pyrrhonic* is another entry into this interesting genre-- which takes both patience and a willingness to delve into it.

This poetic endeavor is filled with poems with footnote numbers and pages where words are blacked out. The footnote numbers relate to the notes in the back which might be explanations or photographs of a rock drummer, a fish, Windsor Knots, ancient texts and so many other pictures or drawings. There are references to the Crucifixion, Nietzsche, Orpheus, Chinese meditations, the appearance of the Virgin Mary at Fatima, Portugal and so many more ideas and concepts that makes the reader have to stop and think.

Here is one example (without footnotes) of Erdman's enigmatic poetry:

Some Evenings

*while I try to scrub off my skin
the physicists theorize elegantly*

*into my ear. (How a cochlea
presents the Golden Ratio' ! Nautiloid*

*of the aural seas.) To start
me wondering about what timeline I'm living*

*just 3 inches to the left. Sometimes I itch
for needles to swim the mantel of my skin, split*

*vulgar corpuscles. Technology inside strings sublimely
vibrates as deep inside everything. Such echoes*

*Gothic cathedrals were built around, buttressed.
Builders not knowing what sings*

Wilderness House Literary Review 13/1

*inside Geometry; just as there are words
implanted somewhere, cleft recesses of my mouth,*

Sometimes I try to tune this inaudible hum

*of spheres with chemical bonds,
sciences of blood and want, such*

adenoidal pillars – irenic, primitive.

Here the poet has mixed her crucial combinations of physical and mental with perhaps a dose of drugs? It is a personal poem which in the end is seeking primal peace. How she accomplishes this may confuse some and may not be readily accessible to others. It is what is pyrrhonic about her poetry. It is and it is not.

So is skepticism. Pyrrhonism as skepticism was a thought process founded by Pyrrho in the fourth century BCE. So here -- 25 centuries later it is kept alive by Ms. Erdman in this strange and entertaining 21st century version.

Here is one of the blackout poems with [===] representing Erdman's blacked out word. The poem also appeared as bold type.

(32)
(Woods [===])

(a)
*--the shallow folds [===]
[===] dabbled with [===] growth,
[===]lakes of bluebells, pieced [===] primroses.*

(b)
*In [===] green spots [===]
Were eyes of [===]primrose: bluebells [===]
In skeins about [===]*

What I would like to do with this poem – and I have read it a few times – each time that I read it I put in my own words, usually different words. I feel like I am writing the poem with the author giving it different meaning each time.

This is a book of poetry I will have to read several times, though I imagine there are many out there who will get it the first time around. No matter it is an enjoyable work of poetic endeavor.