

In A Moment We May Be Strangely Blended

Poems in Four Sets

By David Giannini

Dos Madres Press, Loveland, Ohio

www.dosmadres.com, ISBN: 978-1-948017-30-5, 85 Pages

Review by Dennis Daly

Sucked into the circular stir of worldly playtime and metaphoric toads, the reader of David Giannini's new collection of poems, *In A Moment We May Be Strangely Blended*, seeks out objects of solidity like a book or a sofa or a bed or an arctic poppy for balance in the midst of indeterminacy. But to no avail. Giannini is just too good at what he does.

Joy emanates from these poems in classical cacophonies and word waves. In addition, this poet appears to actually like what he does. He amuses his audience with mortality's imaginings and historical absurdities. Some of these poems need to be bottled and thrown into the space-time sea for other generations in other universes to grimace and chuckle at. That is, if there ever are future generations. The poet seems to entertain some doubts on that score.

In his very first poem, *Process At the End of Winter*, Giannini, after sorting out his sense of cosmic time with an absurd opening irony — a metaphoric (and amusing) semantic slip, relates a self-to-self conversation in which he beautifully describes the creation process. The poet says,

*...I talked and insisted
to the man inside, in his plot,
let's make some progress, you know,
a seed toward sequoia, an imp
into cougar, chimneys refusing
carcinogen-ghosts, or map-
lessness an actual destination,
and then just got gobsmacked
by the imminent task—I sat
at my desk and sensed the fangs
of something stalking.*

Giannini's extraordinary poem, *In Defense of Magic and Black Hats, Transcendent Illusion and Delusion, an Assay*, rises up from the murky waters of the past, both literary and naturally rooted, with a paean to wonder and mysticism (at least the rabbit-pulling kind), holier-than-thou snollygosters not included. Religions that spark human imaginations enter this worldly magic show with good intentions, at least at first. Giannini considers Christianity in context here,

Wilderness House Literary Review 14/1

*People sensed rain. Saw streams. And that lake, the Sea
of Galilee. Many black days. They entered Galilee, hatless
in that capital of fish, their doubts cast, until that
magician pulled one, then another and another, rare bit out.*

*Before and after that, many magicians pulled worlds
from the World, each with different hats. Orient
and Occident. Black cats of worship. Scylla
and Charybdis swirled. The Romans. Rumi. Full World.*

As his protagonist-skeptic bemoans humanity's position and weed-like commonality and comeliness in his piece entitled *The Cynic's Daily Bell*, Giannini welcomes the exhilarating freedom that accompanies the meaningless of one's life. His pessimism in the face of unchanging biology goes over the top a bit, but he does have a compelling point to make, as did poet John Donne and novelist Ernest Hemingway. He makes it this way,

*I'm not chary of crash blossoms
or asemic texts which make me laugh and give
delight even as I hear the tocsin toll its toxic tell:
in the past 10,000 years or so next to nothing
has been learned well enough to truly implement
ourselves as better beings. Await cells to change?
Every perception blights the thing perceived. Hell,
it's likely too late for genes, so ringeth the bell.*

Word repetition and alliteration, among other verbal mannerisms, serve the poet well in many of his poems. Giannini obviously loves word-play and appreciates both the sophisticated and childish sides to such play. *Boy of Pilgrims*, a piece that mulls humanity's rush to adulthood in the face of brutish barriers and an often shortened life, emblemizes Giannini's rhetorical romping. Here the poet, with grimness, charms his reader,

*... ice up his sleeve,
a knee he skinned
slipping on rock.*

*And he wasn't
even someone
not anyone, not
yet, not set*

*with so many,
so many bled
from the harshness,
so many dead.*

Giannini lacks a logician's knack for knitting disparate things together by their shared traits in order to show a sense of transcendental oneness. Worse, or perhaps better, he has found an outlet in Dadaism. This poet seems to enjoy tearing into nature's comfortable fabric to see the abysmal truths that lie behind. It's not pretty, but sometimes it's very funny. Giannini's poem *Great Dane* begins with a police officer interviewing a woman

Wilderness House Literary Review 14/1

while she restrains Wallace, her very protective and very large dog. The woman sensibly explains her position as a matter-of-fact fait accompli,

*Well, my husband, his name was Wallace, too,
used to beat me, a real abuser, a skinny brute.
He was only skin-and-bones, you know, so one
day our dog felt encouraged and carried him
off. No one stalls in ecstasy or its prospects, not
even a dog, right, officer?*

"Where is your husband?"

*I don't know, said the wife, prob'ly buried
somewhere in the yard. I fought the flaw but
the flaw won.*

*"You're under arrest, mam. You have the right
to remain, I mean remain..."*

Gianini's poems are a perfect antidote to the humorless, self-important troubles thrust upon nature's once simple, now befuddled, plan for the incremental happiness of our species—not. Instead read Giannini for the marvelous fun of it.