

Wilderness House Literary Review 3/1

A darker, sweeter string

Lee Sharkey

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Lee Sharkey lures the reader, catches us, shows us the webs of deception; as a captured audience we face the reality of what was, what is,

*soon enough the dead return and cross the threshold
may slouches her belly good as gold*

and from her poem 'by moon light'

*one will lie beside the unsound of not breathing
eating out the night*

and from 'the suicides'

*we're circling the hole where the ones who abandoned us lie
absent electric*

Her sparse emphatic look at the past/present frees the reader like, *sudden pure white*, to pursue our own responsibility to understand how frail existence is,

*this is how the brain relearns to speak
up stairs
downstairs
left hand right foot
right hand left foot*

Lee Sharkey's language is exquisite, self referential and we are able to devour every thought provoked by the larger reality, history. Sharkey uses repetition, sequence and timing in a struggle to release,

what do you do with an eye in the cup of your hand?

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This is not an easy book of poetry, (for me, at least) each poem compels me to read more, to put the book aside, take it up again.

*it is thought that cows' unhurried lowing
the rise and fall in the evening of toad ululation,
the dense sweet penetration of grasses
in air drawn through the nostrils and deep into lungs
will offer our minds a place to return to
from the caves where they cower*

if you buy no other book for the next five years, this is a must, must read,
must possess, must repeat,

there came the time we were moved to move into the rubble

and

the one who has been silent is the one who sends a message to the future

reviewed by Irene Koronas

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