

Wilderness House Literary Review 5/4

Success of the Seed Plants

Leslie Williams
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Review by Irene Koronas

There are fifty two poems and four sections in this full length book, starting with the first poem, "Fox in the Landscape." The poems reassert, tumbling into each strophe and cutting back old plants so the new stems can emerge in words clipped to the bud, mulching what was:

... "To think of yourself
Snapped, the sweet sap

Tremoring between
States of ice and melt.

An old love wrote me
from his wife's country place

To say he had been hunting there
and could appreciate the hounds" ...

As, Basil Bunting, admonishes, instructs, contributes his maxim to his apprentices "take a chisel to write." Williams crafts her poems with the precision of a seasoned writer, unafraid of pruning:

... "I like the salty parks crew
that brings more soil
for the neighborhood, away

across the river from
the disapproving dames-

where dilettantes can simply
take delight,

and amateurs make their way
with only the authority of love."

The poems live in and out of season; they reflect what happens naturally and what takes place in juxtapositions, "lit in that small division of time seized by itself." Williams' contemplations melt and harden, grow and die, sometimes in one poem, sometimes on one line. I recommend, "Success of the Seed Plants," written by a gifted poet:

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...“Such as: I still know what your father
said, driving you to boarding school.
Grudging scrap of history I’ve taken up
as a plant sucks water
and makes a leaf of it. Substantiated.
That is, my braincase carries you.
It is my favorite idea.”

Irene Koronas
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