



Nodin Press

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Stars Above, Stars Below

poems

Margaret Hasse

Margaret Hasse was part of a remarkable generation of women poets who came of age in the 1970s, adding many more strong female voices to the literary landscape. Her early poems are once again available, now that Nodin Press has acquired and reissued **Stars Above, Stars Below**, a collection that won the Minnesota Voices Project and was first published by New Rivers Press in 1984. These poems offer a unique blend of lyric and narrative qualities, such as in “They Leave You Lonely,” about a high school prom, teenage passion, and a tragedy:

*Moon River crooned out
of the record player as glitter
began to flake from the streamers
above the gym floor, falling
like silver dust on the couples below.*

According to essayist Patricia Hampl, when the book first appeared Hasse—then thirty-four—already had “the assured voice of maturity, a rare ‘old soul’ authority.” Attitudes and preoccupations that Hasse returns to again and again in *Stars Above, Stars Below* include delight in sensual experience, understanding of life’s fragility, appreciation for the largess of memory, and rapt engagement with the natural world, especially the prairies and lakes of the Midwest. As she writes in a poem about hiking alone and listening to bird song:

*The stiller she is the more everything speaks
in the immense vocabulary of being.*

About the Author: Margaret Hasse grew up in Vermillion, South Dakota, graduated from Stanford University, she moved back to the Midwest in 1973, and has made her home in the Twin Cities since then. She has taught numerous poetry writing classes, residencies, and workshops in high schools, colleges and universities, The Loft Literary Center, correctional facilities, community organizations, mental health facilities, and senior centers. Hasse is the author of five collections of poetry: *Stars Above, Stars Below; In a Sheep’s Eye, Darling; Milk and Tides; Earth’s Appetite;* and *Between Us*. She has received numerous grants and awards, and three of her books were finalists for a Minnesota Book Award.

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