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Heaven and Nature

poems

Thomas R. Smith

Heaven and Nature brings together the natural world, the transcendent world of human eros, and the contradictory beauty of our mortality. In the midst of an array of narratives and reflections, the poet is keen to highlight glimmers of a paradisal element in our experience. Part one, "Wild Belonging," takes us through a seasonal cycle—birds, insects, and plants observed near the Kinnickinnic River in western Wisconsin. Part two, "Stay," celebrates the transitory nature of the lives we mourn, both public figures (Jack Kerouac and Rachel Carson are two) and personal friends held in memory. Inevitably, these poems also memorialize vivid shared moments of personal history. In part three, "Heart Jukebox," the poet returns to the world of immediate experience: the "magnificent here and now." Artists and musicians are celebrated, inspirations as varied as a rural sculptor, a young bluegrass band, a foreign film star, and the Beatles. A handful of poems of mature love conclude the section.

Amid the ebb and flow of seasons and relationships, with its losses, dissonnances, and disappointments, the book susstains a steady undercurrent of joy. Readers struggling to identify elements of our world that are worth preserving may find encourgement in the pages of this book.

About the Author

Thomas R. Smith is author of ten previous books of poems, including *The Dark Indigo Current, The Foot of the Rainbow*, *Windy Day at Kabekona: New and Selected Prose Poems*, and *Medicine Year* . He has also edited several books, most recently *The Garden Entrusted to Me: Essays on Poetry and the Writing Life* by Robert Bly. His prose work, *Poetry on the Side of Nature: Writing the Nature Poem as an Act of Survival*, came out from Red Dragonfly Press in 2022. He teaches poetry at the Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis and posts poems and essays on his website at www.thomasrsmithpoet.com.

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