

A World of Weird Truths and Truthful Weirdness

Else Cederborg

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The term “triple threat” is sometimes used in sports or entertainment to describe a person with three distinct and notable skills. Danish writer Else Cederborg might be a literary equivalent, demonstrating the ability to write short stories, poetry, and essays, which are all included in her book *A World of Weird Truths and Truthful Weirdnesses*.

In the past, Cederborg translated several well-known literary works from English to Danish, and she has written well-received literary criticism. More recently, she has concentrated on her own original work, authoring several books in English.

The first section of *A World of Weird Truths and Truthful Weirdnesses*, titled “Fantastic Tales, Fables, and Stories of Realities Beyond Reality,” consists of fourteen stories, none longer than six pages. Some stories are successful and memorable, and others, less so. Cederborg’s writing is concise, but sometimes marked by strange choices of wording. When an angel targets a woman for conversion, the woman replies, “this chaos is supposed to converse me?” In another story, a lion asks a monkey, “Were your Mom their dinner, or why did they shoot her?” and then says, “I don’t understand anything of this.” The writing feels like a tale told by an excellent storyteller who has not mastered English yet.

The book’s second section contains twenty-nine short poems—some profound, some easily forgotten, and some, like “In the End,” linger with the reader. “In the end, it came together / all together, all like one / one flash of insight / one flash of regrets / call it the answer / the ultimate knowledge / or simply ‘too late.’”

In the third and final section of the book, Cederborg offers eleven essays recounting interesting tales and biographical profiles of mostly Danish figures, both historical and current. Cederborg excels here, and, despite the slightly imperfect English, she recounts some obscure and fascinating nonfiction on subjects from exiled women to unicorn scholars.

A World of Weird Truths and Truthful Weirdnesses shows that Cederborg is a thoughtful writer with a versatile pen. Her poems sometimes read like prose, and the prose can be poetic, but the overall impression from the book is that of a strong, uncommon Danish viewpoint, and her work is worth reading. Although most of Cederborg’s writings aren’t Denmark-centric, *A World of Weird Truths and Truthful Weirdnesses* is particularly recommended for readers with an interest in Danish culture.

PETER DABBENE (October 16, 2012)

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