



[ceciliadincetate@mysoul.com](mailto:ceciliadincetate@mysoul.com)

**Cecilia Cetateanu**

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*Cecilia Cetateanu's atmospheric, concrete verses are comfortable in their own ambiguity, beats, and style.*

Cecilia Cetateanu's rhythmic, dynamic poetry collection is atmospheric and spiritual, delving into broad, metaphysical concepts without becoming too abstract. It is a solid, compelling collection from start to finish.

The book gathers lyrical free-verse poems that do not share common themes. The collection is held together by the pieces' transcendent qualities. Poems work through notions of awareness, healing, and beauty, and include odes to the author's son, meditations on springtime, and elegies for euthanized racehorses. While topics aren't always interesting on the surface, the book's fresh language and turns of phrase command attention.

Lines possess a staccato, rhythmic beauty, as if begging to be read out loud. In the first piece, "A Vision," the speaker begins with a broad scope, calling forth golden imagery of the sun and daffodils, and tying those to the notion of the beginning of life itself. Then the speaker moves from sunlit illustrations to images that are grim and triumphant, defiantly announcing that hellish experiences "did not rob my smile."

Such poems celebrate binaries coexisting and pushing against each other, never quite dominating nor submitting themselves completely to the other. They contain reminders that pain leads to birth, and wounds to new skin. Delicate, eloquent lines hit emotional veins with just the right amount of pressure:

*New world  
Is shaping the words, while the song sounds almost lovely,  
It sticks to the body with the fervor of pain.*

*From each corner of the metropolis  
surrounded by computerized roses,  
I hear the thin shell of hearts breaking.*

These compendious poems are rarely longer than a page, saying much with few words and leaving their various meanings and conclusions open-ended. This allows for the pieces to be read over and over again, offering up new meanings each time.

Well-crafted, articulate language never strays into overly ornate or flowery territory. Cetateanu forms her poetry around the balance between the concrete and the abstract, culminating in effortless, readable end products.

While every piece is solid, some rise to greatness. "Magical Harvest" is a particularly memorable piece that brims with beauty:

*I should come out noiselessly to the surface  
Clear and unknown,*

*Couple of fins missing around my ankles.  
I should leave the submerged hieroglyphic libraries  
And the towers with oxygen,  
I should deny all my traces inside the protective sleepless  
water  
To be stranded breathlessly in front of a crowd  
Gathered on a tiny island  
To harvest the bits of harmonized words.*

Cetateanu smoothly juxtaposes scenery, images, and metaphors, resulting in a powerful collection that shines. These atmospheric, concrete verses are comfortable in their own ambiguity, beats, and style.

MYA ALEXICE (October 22, 2018)

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