Clarion Review

Dark Currents: A Journey Into the Alps
Arthur F. Temple
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Two Stars (out of Five)

The writings and drawings in this volume were created by the author during a severe depression. While he was a young teenager Temple was subject to a great many radiation treatments and now middle-aged he suffers from multiple life-threatening health issues. But the author's sufferings have been the result of emotional trauma as well and his soul is deeply scarred.

Although classed as "poetry" the works in *Dark Currents* might better be described as something akin to "aphorism." The short pithy statements were taken from journal entries the author made over a period of two years when ill and out of work he was confined to an apartment only going out to receive medical care. His writings easily tap into the dark realms of the human psyche; readers may find themselves engulfed in depression's circular logic and drawn into a downward spiral leading to what Temple describes aptly as "the abyss." Although as with all aphoristic writing the statements embody truths they are truths reflective of a particular mind-state and the world is seen through a dark lens that obscures other possible perhaps lighter tones.

Writing has long been known to provide release and at least to some degree relief from sorrows that seem too great to bear; the act of writing may create a sense of connection to the larger community of those who have been betrayed. This seems to be the case with Temple's work as he refers to a community of "brothers and sisters" ("Thank You") who can understand him because they too have tasted the black waters of the abyss; it is with these unseen comrades that Temple feels it is possible to build some kind of future. In the fourth chapter the author invites readers into the abyss with the words: "You have now entered the gates of the abyss. The pathway of divine knowledge lies within these pages. Read these words and their meditational seals repeatedly for the pathway to emancipation is hidden within. Enjoy this journey without fear or prejudices so that we shall become brothers and sisters again." The "meditational seals" of which the author speaks are the line drawings included with each work.

"Faith" and "friendship" are described as "two evil monsters" that should never be let

out of their cages (“Two Monsters”). The author warns that “if you do [release them] then your pathway leads to the ghost land being on the outside looking in through the shadows to an ordinary life that was never yours.” One’s very reason for being is to the author’s mind suspect as he describes in “Proverb”: “Everyone is a recipient of their own personal script before their birth. Then everyone is punished for knowing their lines.”

Those who wish to understand what it feels like to be in the depths of a serious depression especially companions of the depressed and their therapists will certainly learn from these writings; those who are themselves struggling with depression should be warned that their own dark feelings might deepen and take greater hold upon them as they read.

Kristine Morris