

Digging to Wonderland: Memory Pieces

David Trinidad

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Propelled by an impulse to look back and take stock, the prose poems of David Trinidad's intimate *Digging to Wonderland* twin memory and nostalgia.

Conversational and confessional, the book has the tone of diary entries as it catalogs reflections on Trinidad's early life in the San Fernando Valley. He was born in the 1950s, had a robust career in poetry, and faces his impending shift into retirement. These poems are a crosscut of his life, a series of narrative glimpses; his habits and patterns form concentric rings that expand with age, but that don't alter in substance.

These prose poems are not beholden to plotting so much as to revealing the compelling narrative voice of Trinidad, a born raconteur whose ease has been polished by a lifetime of practiced study. Whether through a story about a pea coat purchased at a Hollywood costume warehouse's auction, or an admission that he has some of Sylvia Plath's baby hairs, Trinidad uses vignettes to cover ranging concerns that emphasize the correlative influence of personal relationships and geographic locations over time.

Many of the poems ring with the concerns of a memoir: they work to record stories of particular meaning to Trinidad, to ensure that they outlive the erosion of time and memory. Thus, some read like a who's who of US poetry, with "inside baseball"-style crosscurrents of connection, debts, personal drama, and deaths. In other entries, the stories are so tied to Trinidad's family's particularities that connections to the wider world are indistinct.

The prose poems of *Digging to Wonderland* are easy to fall into. In them, the past functions as both an aperture and a rabbit hole, enveloping and eclipsing all but David Trinidad's concerns.

LETITIA MONTGOMERY-RODGERS (May / June 2022)

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