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FOREWORD REVIEW ♥♥♥♥♥ POETRY

How Beautiful the Beloved

Gregory Orr
Copper Canyon Press (April 2009)
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Gregory Orr, prolific author and a man who has endured much personal loss, continues to write about the human predicament in spare and loving language. “Grief will come to you. Loss? You can be certain of it,” he writes. So “no wonder we need / Hope and courage-” and that is found in love, in the word, in the beloved. Mary Oliver calls him “…a Walt Whitman without an inch of Whitman’s bunting or oratory.” In these pages, he is more nearly a modern-day Rumi. This is not primarily a poetry of image, but of ideas, perfectly distilled. Orr brings together the monumental themes of love and loss in small, spare, and exquisite koan-like poems. He writes “as if the world itself spoke / And I was supposed to answer.” Gentle and direct, stark and loving, this is the kind of book you keep next to your bed, to clear your head and redirect you towards gratitude and love. We are here, says Orr, to praise:

Praising all creation, praising the world:

Thats our job - to keep

The sweet machine of it

Running as smoothly as it can.

With words repairing, where it wears out,

Where it breaks down.

With songs and poems keeping it going.

With whispered endearments greasing its gears.

TERESA SCOLLON (July / August 2009)

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