Mulroney & Others
Sarabande Books
978-1-889330-38-9
(February 15, 2000)

All the characters in this volume of poetry, whether the author created them or not, have a commonality of
realness, in the sense that they evoke a personal, human truth. “Mulroney,” the
title character, is not a very complex fellow, yet in the last lines of the
poem he shows the reader an intimate moment of wisdom. In the poem “Niagara,” a
man is trying to understand the fact that his marriage is over. Wormser writes:

Was there anything glibber than time?
It was like the bottle redemption center
Where you counted empties. You came up
With a number but what you were counting had
Nothing left in them…

These insights into ordinary people and their stories are comforting in their
familiarity. The reader is drawn into a level of humanity that all people share
and yet may judge prematurely or harshly. The author’s perspective of different
behavioral twists in an outwardly rather humdrum person is reminiscent of
Raymond Carver’s characters. There is a commonness that somehow, when drawn
out, appears to have an aspect of beauty. The poem “January” gives a glimpse
into a solitary man’s simplicity of life that is almost zenlike.

”No way to live,” he’d say as he poked
A finger into the frozen throat
Of an unwilling carburetor.
His breath hung in the air
Like a white balloon.

Later on the way to the town where
We worked while the heater
Wheezed fitfully and the windshield
Showed indifference to the defroster

He’d turn to me and say that
The two best things in this world
Were hot coffee and winter sunrises.
The icy roads beckoned to no one,
Snow began to drift down sleepily,
The peace of servitude sighed and dreamed.

Wormser is a wordsmith. While some of his poems are easily read as he successfully nestles words together in a seemingly simple, pleasant manner; other lines tumble quickly together and hinge on words that may occasionally require a refresher at the dictionary. As the author says in “Melancholy Baby”: ”You lie awake and polish some words./ You never know when you might want one of them.” The same goes for these poems. It is a good book to have nearby to return to for reassurance of the imperfect, but enduring human qualities shared by all.

Aimé Merizon