FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Open House
Beth Ann Fennelly
Zoo Press
978-0-9708177-5-4
(February 28, 2002)

In “The Impossibility of Language,” the opening section of this book, the poet examines the making
of poetry and the ironies involved in finding the correct words and their etymologies. She finds poetry in her mother’s post-it notes and humor in being asked for a poem rather than a wedding gift, in “Poem Not to Be Read at Your Wedding,” a wry epithalamium: “You ask me for a poem about love / in place of a wedding gift, trying to save me / money? Well, Carmen, I would rather / give you your third set of steak knives / than tell you what I know / Don’t make me warn you of stars, how they see us?”

Using rooms as a metaphor for the poet’s psyche, Fennelly writes, “I sing of four categories from which art is drawn: / ambition, love, religion and death.” She revisits death and the losses that haunt humans in “The Room of Echoes,” a series of elegies for her father.

Domesticity abounds in the book’s closing section, “The Room of Everywhere.” In her notes, Fennelly thoughtfully includes a recipe alluded to in the poem, “Why I Can’t Cook for Your Self-Centered Architect Cousin.”

Fennelly’s poems have been published in Poets of the New Century, The Penguin Book of the Sonnet, The Best American Poetry 1996, and The Pushcart Prize 2001 in addition to numerous literary journals and periodicals. This first collection, winner of the 2001 Kenyon Review Prize in Poetry, confirms the poet’s reputation as one of the best young voices in American poetry.