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FOREWORD REVIEW ♥♥♥♥♥

Spar

Karen Volkman
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The author's second book and winner of the Iowa

Poetry Prize, this volume reads like glossolalia: it's an ecstatic speaking in tongues. "O verb, o void. Not more loose, but I kept a part back. I ogled the hostels, figured the fardels. My importunate frolic kept debtors at a dispatch."

Presented mostly as prose poems, resisting traditional poetry forms, these also resist narrative, closure, and, most of the time, imagery. Sound is privileged above everything. There are lines seductive with rhythm and hint throughout: "Tender feather, tell me a flight thing, never a trap thing, never a fall."

"In the clairvoyance of loving wrongly, o glass pillow, o swallow, is dream is dare is dagger." With glances back at twentieth-century French poetry and a grab bag of American forebears, Volkman makes poems that insist on their own terms—"But if it is space you must fail in, teach it din," she writes.

Readers who ask, "What does it mean?" will need to weigh one line at a time, first for its sonic pleasures, and only afterwards for possible messages.
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