



## Spar

### Karen Volkman

University of Iowa Press (Feb 5, 2002)

Unknown \$16.00 (72pp)

978-0-87745-807-4

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.

(April 15, 2002)

*Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The author of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the author for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.*