

The Way You Run in Dreams

Tim Cremin

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The Way You Run in Dreams is an attentive, ecopoetic gathering of texts that honors felt and lived experiences with a clear, defined voice.

Time and its ravages, absence, and the silent interludes before and after human encounters inform Tim Cremin's new chapbook, *The Way You Run in Dreams*. Twenty-eight portraits mine the momentous from the everyday. These lean narratives reveal a naturalist's curiosity.

Whether writing about a cougar's retreat from a nearby wilderness—an event that inspires the poet to consider the gulf between modern life and ancient wisdom—the shifting nature of parent-child relationships, or seasonal impressions, these poems stay rooted in familiar observations. They're often charged with a "sense that what's ahead / has already started stirring in the ground," which, rather than seeming prophetic or foreboding, reinforces the cyclical order of the world. There's comfort to be found in both life and death, both celebration and mourning. The result is poetry that gathers power through the reverent act of noticing.

Direct, conversational, and following in the vein of poets such as Ted Kooser, these brief poems are appealing because of their appreciation for a variety of locales and people. They often examine memories of parents with empathy. They also capture multiple, conflicting sensations with ease, as in "Planet Anura," where wonder and loss reveal themselves:

*I wish I could save
this fountain of sonic flares

so we could share it later.
I miss it already, even though

I'm here in the middle of it happening.*

At times the meanings of these expressive lines rest close to the surface. The poems don't always take bold risks, and they seldom range beyond the limits set by their titles, which tend to signal the poem's contents rather than expanding on them or building tension.

An exception is "Laboratory Notebook," a poem that sets the expectation for scientific inquiry but rewardingly follows a journey through a year of wanderings. Here, a stylistic departure also stands out. The poem is set in two adjacent columns. One lists the months of the year, and the other features tercets with observations and reflections; the effect is both an orderly consideration of seasonal rhythms and a series of miniature still lifes.

The work is noteworthy for its emphasis on the earth. Even as poems mark human impacts upon the environment—such as occurs on a construction site that "grinds out its daily quota of steel noise"—they turn a sharp eye toward persistent natural beauty. A scorpion is likened to "a blade of fire / staving off ice." In the woods, "history is

written / in concentric rings.” Glacial silt in “Indian Ridge” feeds into a skillfully visual poem.

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KAREN RIGBY (February 21, 2018)

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