War of the Foxes

Richard Siken
Copper Canyon Press (Apr 28, 2015)
Softcover $17.00 (96pp)
978-1-55659-477-9

A poet for whom face value represents life at its most treacherous, Richard Siken's 2004 first collection, *Crush*, was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award and won the Thomas Gunn Award and a Lambda Literary Award.

> *Raphael,* Saint George and the Dragon *, 1504–6*
>
> *It's hard to talk about what you believe while you are*
> *believing it. Fervor reduces thought to shorthand and*
> *all we get is an icon. Give a man a weapon and you*
> *have a warrior. Put him on a horse and you have*
> *a hero. The weapon is a tool. The horse is a metaphor.*
> *Raphael painted this twice—white horse facing east*
> *against the greens, white horse facing west against the*
> *yellows. The maiden flees or prays, depending. A basic*
> *dragon, the kind you'd expect from the Renaissance.*
> *Evidence of evil but not proof. There's a companion*
> *piece as well: Saint Michael. Paint angels, it's easier:*
> *you don't need the horse. Michael stands on Satan's*
> *throat, vanquishing, while everything brown burns red.*
> *All these things happened. Allegedly. When you paint*
> *an evil thing, do you invoke it or take away its power?*
> *This has nothing to do with faith but is still a good*
> *question. Raphael was trying to say something about*
> *spirituality. This could be the definition of painting.*
> *The best part of spirituality is reverence. There are other*
> *parts. Some people like to hear the sound of their own*
> *voice. If you don't believe in the world it would be*
> *stupid to paint it. If you don't believe in God, then who*
> *are you talking to?*

MATT SUTHERLAND (Fall 2015)

Source: https://www.forewordreviews.com/reviews/war-of-the-foxes/