Clarion Review

Poetry

Your Words: A Collection of Selected Poems
Leonard Gigliobianco
Outskirts Press
978-1-4327-8130-9
Four Stars (out of Five)

Leonard Gigliobianco's debut poetry collection, *Your Words*, is a contribution to postmodernism that is at once challenging and enigmatic. The poems cover much ground—global warming, rivers, politics—and yet remain open to analysis.

The first poem, "After All," is both lyrical and controlled, tightly written yet with a subject matter that ranges. Seemingly, it is on the topics of death, work, and the act of dreaming, but what makes it stand out from other poems that broach these subjects is its pondering of the loss of dreams upon waking: "the linings of fleshly nano-seconds, the / ephemera of innumerable summations / until—now—my alarm clock yells / no more and I can't know that my captives / have escaped and scattered to form other / matters." The image of dreams as captives is arresting because dreams are paradoxically free to develop as they will in an individual's subconscious, yet are trapped within one's own experiences, butting up against those limits.

Some, perhaps all, of Gigliobianco's poems are poised on the edge of the metaphysical. The poet leaves meaning obscure, but he does return to certain tropes throughout his work. References to astronomy, ancient myths, public parklands, hospitals, and prolonged sickness reoccur. He likes to utilize uncommon words like gneiss and horodeictic.

At the end of the collection is a dramatic poem entitled "Parita" that is meant to be read aloud by at least three different readers. The last poem, "Fractional Lines," could also be acted on a stage and is sprinkled with lines from William Shakespeare's *A Winter's Tale*. Seeing and hearing these pieces recited by a group of voices would be an interesting way to deepen one's understanding of Gigliobianco's poems.

Those who enjoy the challenge of parsing poetry will delight in Gigliobianco's work. He claims as an influence the movement of the Language Poets of the 1970s and 1980s, and as

readers delve deeper into Gigliobianco's poems, it becomes clear in what way. Several are quite spare, just a few lines of two or three words each. Such pieces are truly open to interpretation and need to be read mulitple times before any kind of meaning can be gleaned.

Your Words is a collection of poetry that can be turned to again and again, year after year, to discover some new connotation or redefine an old one.

Olivia Boler