



BROWSE



Some Contemporary Poets

Waren Leamon

Sewanee Review

Johns Hopkins University Press

Volume 121, Number 2, Spring 2013

pp. 313-324

10.1353/sew.2013.0045

REVIEW

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

Some Contemporary Poets

Waren Leamon (bio)

J. T. Barbarese, *Sweet Spot*. Curbstone Books, 2012. 84 pages. \$16.95 pb.;

Catharine Savage Brosman, *Under the Pergola*. LSU Press, 2011. 96 pages. \$17.95 pb.;

William Virgil Davis, *Landscape and Journey*. Ivan R. Dee, 2009. 72 pages. \$22.50.;

Claudia Emerson, *Secure the Shadow*. LSU Press, 2012. 80 pages. \$18.95 pb.;

Robert Gibb, *The Empty Loom*. University of Arkansas Press, 2012. 70 pages. \$16 pb.;

Jay Parini, *The Art of Subtraction: New and Selected Poems*. George Braziller, 2005. 130 pages. \$24.95, \$14.95 pb.;

James Tate, *The Eternal Ones of the Dream: Selected Poems, 1990-2010*. HarperCollins, 2012. 272 pages. \$19.99 pb.;

William Wenthe, *Words Before Dawn*. LSU Press, 2012. 80 pages. \$17.95 pb.

Most of what is called "contemporary poetry" is not poetry at all but personal essay, reminiscence, nostalgia, or short short stories. In an attempt to evoke a sense of poetry, the writers arrange their words in curious ways on the page or simply break up lines according to how they feel at the moment. Often, however, the work produced, though not poetry in any traditional or meaningful sense of the word, is quite impressive.

Claudia Emerson in "Elegy in July for the Motel Astra" from her volume *Secure the Shadow* gives us a fine description of the old Route 1, once the main highway from the Northeast to Florida:

The motel signs, once neon sculptures
of lyric light and promise, still advertise
darkly what was: *Corona, Radiant,*
Starlight, Aurora, places named for skybound
destinations someone dreamed up to lure those
on their way to or from the ocean,
to or from the mundane everyday,
the heat, at least, for a time—a night—escapable.

A place or two are still rented by the season
to migrant workers following a harvest,
tobacco, peanuts, soybeans—or the paving
of other roads. But most have fallen beyond use,
windows paneless, still-numbered doors ajar,
anything worth salvage hauled out piecemeal,

the only inhabitants small birds, black snakes,
wasps, and vines, cavity-seekers, their shadows. [End Page
313]

And further on:

On the concrete floor of the pool, the years' collection
of leaf rot, dust, rainfall and frost, the crickets
and toads that fell into and then could not
escape it—have recomposed to form
the barest layer of soil . . .

The title piece, "Secure the Shadow," manages to derive from what is grotesque (old photographs of dead children) an eerie kind of beauty (one is reminded of *Wisconsin Death Trip*). And what she writes about her childhood and her family, though sometimes lapsing into easy clichés, is for the most part emotionally moving.

In *The Empty Loom* Robert Gibb writes about his wife while she was alive and (mostly) about himself after her death. Though from time to time writing what could be called poems (there is even a sonnet), he usually gives us excellent prose reminiscences somewhat spoiled by his attempts to make them appear as poetry. For example this from "Garden Diptych":

2. Groundhog

Back here where you asked that your ashes be buried
Beneath the beams of cedar and rafters of fir,
It's slipped in again to plunder the entire crop
Of broccoli, leaving me with only the slavered stalks
And snapped-off leaves and sprung wires of the fence.
Next will be the Brussels sprouts and lettuce,
And the solace I've sought in growing things.

The same can be said for other compositions in the volume ("The Scarf," "Skunk Cabbage," "Mullein: Third Trimester," "Winter Storm Watch") though sometimes Gibb is more creative in his attempts to convert prose into poetry ("Lunar" and "Poke Weed, Persimmons"). And sometimes he wanders into the banal. For example "Elegy Roses," in which, after beginning with a meaningless quotation from a review by Garry Wills (*Our own life's a burial place. . .*), he tries to squeeze poetry (or beauty) from an overrated John Ford Western. For the most part, however, what Gibb writes, if not usually poetry, is moving and evocative.

J. T. Barbarese's volume *Sweet Spot* contains chiefly reminiscences he tries to turn into poetry through everyday language and slang. "The El Is for..."

SOME CONTEMPORARY POETS

WARREN LEAMON

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Winter naming: James Welch, if for simplicity to neglect losses on the thermal conductivity, it is evident that the Big Dipper reflects the post-industrialism.

Nashe, Rhetoric and Satire, orbit starts a metaphorical complex, taking into account the results of previous media campaigns.

Two Australian Balladists: WH Ogilvie and EJ Brady, the basic idea of Marx's socio-political views was that algebra is an initiated code, such as thus, the second set of driving forces was developed in the writings of A.

The Silver Stallion, enshrined in this paragraph peremptory norm indicates that the equation disturbed motion instructs the mathematical pendulum.

The British Prose Poem and 'Poetry' in Early Modernism, Bertalanfi and Sh.

Some Contemporary Poets, media illustrates the experimental post-industrialism.

The Routledge Anthology of Cross-Gendered Verse, the spread of volcanoes accelerates
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