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UNLV THESES, DISSERTATIO

Samsara

[Erica Anzalone, University of Nevada, Las Vegas](#)

Award Date

5-1-2013

Degree Type

Dissertation

Degree Name

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Department

English

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Donald Revell

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Third Committee Member

Julie Staggers

Fourth Committee Member

Elizabeth Nelson

Number of Pages

75

Abstract

In Samsara, I bring a spiritual-historical lens to art, war, feminin in extremis. Although the word samsara resonates mostly with faiths, meaning literally to wander through the rounds of death of transience and trauma crosses cultures, including Muslim, notions of spirituality. Bosnia, Iowa, Boston, and Prague are a mandala-like hourglass of this collection. My voice often issues in a register and speaks with rebellious power from a place of power. "You want me to yes sir/I'll get on it." By placing religious icons in a porn shop, I question the commercialization of spirituality and feminine desire. The speaker's aggression - "I threw a navy" -- and capitalism whose children "wave mickey mouse sparklers

Babies haunt this collection. The poem "Sojourner" in particular inhabits space within the lyric tradition, as a woman speaks to her unborn child and sends it back to wander in the bardo. The poems enact an ontological spiritual recycling of images throughout the book: ultimately, everything returns eternally. The detritus of language and body "like a baby's fingernail" - recombine like DNA into something alive. "We have had their incubators turned on." The personal is political. In "Rothko. In "Judging Vermeer," I turn a critical eye on the Dutch Golden Age that created a safe haven from war which allowed him to paint scenes, while she also looks at our current wars with a self-incorporation. "Samsara" the domestic is anything but idyllic as men and women wage war of the sexes - "Missile minuet, he said./And I the masseuse Martha Stewart style genius."

Provocative and beautifully grotesque, these poems light up the world and punch the gut with a rainbow.

Keywords

poetry

Disciplines

Poetry

Language

English

Repository Citation

Anzalone, Erica, "Samsara" (2013). *UNLV Theses, Dissertations, Capstones*. 1796.

<https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/thesesdissertations/1796>

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