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No More Milk



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Customer Reviews

When I was reading this book, the word that kept coming to mind was "hard." Not in the sense of "difficult," for these poems go down easily and probably would even for people who think they don't like poetry. And not in the sense of "hard-bitten," for even the most negative of the sentiments expressed here have a sense of fairness and compassion on the flip-side. No, when I thought of these poems as "hard," I was comparing them to coal that has turned into diamonds, the atoms as tightly packed as they can possibly be until they suddenly turn crystal clear. These poems get maximum value out of a limited number of words arranged in very short lines. The collection as a whole is "hard" in the same way. There's no filler, and every poem has a reason for being included. You get the sense that this is the distillation of a whole life's work. I've never met Karen Craig, but I have been a follower of her wonderful writing blog for some time. I know that she has spoken there often of her regret at having waited so long to publish her first book. Although it's true we'll never know the kind of book she would have produced at 25 or 35, I somehow doubt that either of those Karens would have come up with a book this polished. While it's often said that you can't skip the awkwardness of a first date and move right to the second, maybe this isn't true for books. It seems to be the case here. My favorite piece in this collection is "Guided Meditation: Inventory," in which Craig has devoted a section to each of the parts of the body, from feet to crown. There's a lot of talk online these days about women loving their bodies, but much of it amounts to nothing more than rah-rah cheerleading. ("I love my body because it's awesome!")

I recently received my copy of "No More Milk" by Karen Craig. It is the perfect summer read, even though it is poetry. I'm typically not a fan of poetry. However, Craig's chapbook, her third, with a fourth under contract, is as enjoyable as a tall glass of whole milk, poured and drunk standing in front of the open fridge door. Craig uses diction to address the needs of her audience. There are no big words one might not know. Also, her use of themeism is spectacular in that the themes of her poems are stories. Meaning that they are easy to follow and understand. Her voice is almost always first person. So personal. Also, her use of punctuation is unique and perfectly suitable for poetry. This is because of poetic license. I am certain she has the highest license available to poets. White space is very important in this day in age. Millennials and beyond are very visual generation, as reported by a source. Therefore, white space helps break up the text into easy viewable and, therefore, easy to read amounts. There is nothing hard about reading this, including the font which was well chosen. Some might say that the cover is distracting because it has nothing to do with milk. On the other hand, the abstractness of the artwork goes well with poetry, so it's not bad. Others might believe that writing poems about taking kids money to buy milk is a form of child abuse or neglect and therefore uncomfortable to read about. However, Karen does say she leaves an IOU (I Owe You), so readers assume she paid the kid back. Readers might want to check their privilege before judging others. My grandma has stories about not having enough money back in the day.

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