

Blotterature

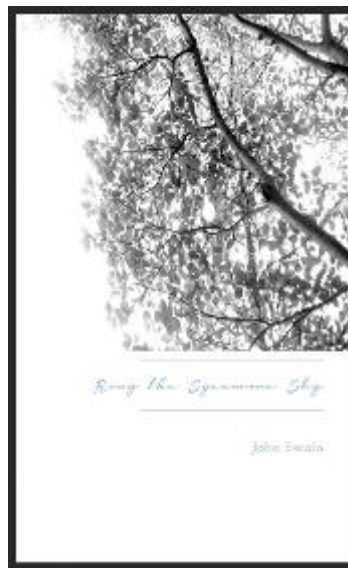
Merging the art of fancy talk with blue collar sensibilities.

Blot Lit Reviews: Ring the Sycamore Sky by John Swain

November 12, 2014 · by blotterature · in Blot Lit Reviews, Guest Reviewer ·
Review: Ring the Sycamore Sky by John Swain

Red Paint Hill Publishing (<http://redpainthill.com/>), 2014

Reviewed by Elizabeth Mobley



(<https://www.createpace.com/4723860>).

John Swain's first full-length poetry collection, *Ring the Sycamore Sky*. (<https://www.createpace.com/4723860>), awakens every sense of touch, taste, and smell. Situated in nature and captivatingly sensual, these poems reach into the depths of the soul. Each poem plays with the idea of being overcome by the animalistic impulses of love, ecstasy, and desire.

From the first poem, "Light is Altar," there is a feeling of wanting, of an intertwining of worship and beauty. "And since light is altar, \ you drink from the wingbone of an eagle" dances off of the tongue and twirls around sensuality. Implicit with the sensations of what being in love is like, Swain teases out a yearning for what is just beyond reach. Although most of the poems are not explicitly about relationships, the overtones weigh heavy as the "winds sweep across the vaults of the sea".

The simplicity of every verse maintains a melodic repetition long after the reader sets the book down, for example, my favorite poem in the piece, "Certainty and Knowing":

*Careless are days
when I mistake
certainty and knowing,
one is sun,
the other is
your arms around me
sleeping*

These twenty sweet words left me enchanted and needing more. Like the excitement of a new relationship, this poem nostalgically lingers in memories of warmth waking up near another, feeling the hot sun on cold days, and being enwrapped in the comfortable arms of a beloved.

Every word from Swain beguiles the audience, and like Italo Calvino's *Upon A Winter's Night A Traveler*, the reader falls in love with the author, soaking up the sunshine of each expression, taken in by the easily digested themes, the stark imagery, and the rhythmic rapture as "the sun scorched hill touched our backs \ beneath the golden talons of a closer sky."

At the last poem, I was "searching murmurs for the presence" of another collection, but found that I must wait for more. Rarely do I rip through an entire book of poetry in one sitting, but *Ring the Sycamore Sky* was impossible to put down. Swain's carnal collection should leap off the virtual bookshelves of Red Hill Publishing and into your cart today, but expect to ravenously devour each line until you realize there are no more pages left.

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