



The New Measures

A.F. Moritz

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The follow up to *The Sentinel*, winner of the Griffin Poetry Prize, A.F. Moritz's *The New Measures* is a bold collection of fiery, passionate, visionary, and fiercely singing new work. These poems make unique music, by turns tender and forceful, terrified and assured, grateful and enraged. They revel in pleasure, and the thirst for more pleasure. And they insist on the hope — perhaps paradoxical, perhaps impossible, yet never extinguished — for the perfection of a world both natural and human. *The New Measures* makes fear and grief into prophecy and joy at each turn of phrase. It is a brilliant new work from one of our greatest poets.

The New Measures Details

Date : Published April 7th 2012 by House of Anansi Press

ISBN : 9781770891104

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Format : Paperback 88 pages

Genre : Poetry, Nonfiction, Literature

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From Reader Review The New Measures for online ebook

Anna (lion_reads) says

"What will you be in that cross alley
you'll turn into, where I can't see?"

I am not a worthy critic of poetry, but I can say that many poems in this collection moved me or had evoked a wistful nostalgia for a moment in time I can re-feel but can't fully remember. In my naïveté I might call the poems beautiful and their rhythm intoxicating. They insist on being heard, urging you to keep going and keep returning to the human capacity to find wonder in the smallest, most primal things.

"...Anyway, yesterday
I had this idea, this line of lyrics
to put to a bird's song I heard
from the mirror boskage in the underground city.
Everything that comes has come before
but in some other, forgotten shape
that was never, or badly, born
and insists, waiting to be loved properly."

Nick Seeger says

I loved the way this collection of poems set out to renew itself at every turn. The poems felt connected, yet distinct, cumulative yet tangential.

Though my favourite poems were littered throughout the volume (Farewell to Lake Michigan most of all) the first and last poems seem a near-perfect arc under which these poems flourish. The Book to Come sets up the theme of renewal perfectly, yet it is in Open House where it seems to be consummated. Here, what seems like a dream or a fading memory is revised and retold, recast in various ways while continuously questioning it's own motives.

It's a fine book of poems to be sure. The writing flowed so naturally that I had to remind myself on many separate occasions to slow down and take it all in.

mwpm says

The first and simplest things were best.
Light, and then darkness and wind.
Water, which is light with darkness
for its body and wind
for its blood and action. Then trees
arise on its banks: complex things
and implying complexities, implying

a whole earth, but staying where they are,
at home to pay homage to the simple.
Trees arise and are unformed song,
whether sound when the air stirs
or the rhythm of their standing side by side
in silent black or bright. Next comes one
traveling, eager, a dread of what comes next,
who stops under them awhile,
imagines their lyrics, and imagines
himself abolished in simplicity.

- **Simplicity**, pg. 2

* * *

Scum of life on the ponds
clearing as it dies off in autumn
so they will stare up, bright, black and still
amid the last crumbs - a few towers
of leather, copper, and flame - of the first wonder
of the world. Many eyes with one gaze
waiting for never to rise. The angel
who brought us the idea
is always here, nude winter and summer,
unmovingly wandering in the fields and weeping by the stream
under the willow tree, whether they are fields,
stream, and willow, or later desert. The angel
is always right here, as we are,
when the sun and the planet swing away
and leave us in black space. We make
love to the angel ceaselessly,
monotonously: the body
all sex and every sex with no insides,
our love that never moves
while we desert and revolve.

- **The Idea of the Flood**, pg. 14

* * *

The cob of corn - is this
your transformation,
your earth-change? Having
eaten you, do I
hold you again? Did
you drop into the land
as a seed to come forth
a blade of grass

like a tree, with kernels
that are teeth, cool
close-packed suns, drops
of a golden ocean,
nuggets of sugar? And
can I talk to the blackbirds
and the spiders that
cling to you, making you
some part of their worlds,
as if they are syllables
meant in friendship and
gathering to a sentence
intelligible to me? You
are dead and this life
doesn't satisfy. It
seems to me I'm alone
if sometimes happy to be.

- **Symbolism**, pg. 25

* * *

Although it's likely you're on your own
(at this moment in this city of five million)
reading the poems of Traherne,
and there was no one till you lit your lamp,
the kingdom of childhood keeps being founded
in his voice and his seeing,
which are a sort of birth. A birth goes on
in the dark of a poor family, or a mother alone.
Then comes the small bright circle of the faces:
lover pores over sleeping loved one, parent over child
in their enclosure we name home,
a hut in the plain so bare there's not a tongue
of grass to make the wind hiss. Unknown
to the world a world exists:
trees and streams, birds all the colours of the flowers.
So Traherne pours over you
his wild remembrance of the world to come. And would
even in the silence of his book
if it were lost and lay unopened
two hundred years. Even if he had died
before he sang the Eden in his look.

- **Essential Poem**, *for John Hollander*, pg. 39

* * *

Time was still.
To stop that nonsense
a helicopter
beat the sky.

- **Noon in Our World**, pg. 41

* * *

The poem I want to write you is a dream
but I can't dream it with you, only tell you,
wide awake, what it was like. "You stood in a doorway
and caught my eye across the room.
I'd thought you were in India, and I came walking
through the air, above the heads of the others,
but there was something I was supposed to bring you,
a cup, or some sort of long animal
with soft rubies for fur. So I turned back
and went looking for that, worried,
not knowing what it was..." And you would think,
listening to the dream, I had a face in it, my face,
that I was only me, walking on the air
near the ceiling of that room like a mountain valley
with geometrical cave palaces
carved into the cliffs to thousands of feet
above a flowering jungle. I got lost there
and never made it back to where you waited.
Then I woke up. So now I have to tell you:
in that dream I have no face, or not this face.
I have no awareness of a face. You look at me
as if I stir you: a human being, a man, beautiful.
When you see me, light flows out of you, your lips,
forehead, white dress, the round of hips and belly.
And I look back at you free of shame. My face
forgotten, like a child's. I'm not surprised
my face that brought me failure brings your light.

- **Analysis of a Dream**, pg. 58

Andrew Sare says

Each Page in this book is first. Each re-begins

, The Book to Come

