

The Idaho Librarian, Vol 59, No 2 (2009)

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Review: *New Poets | Short Books | Volume III*

Reviewed by Gloria Ray

New Poets | Short Books | Volume III

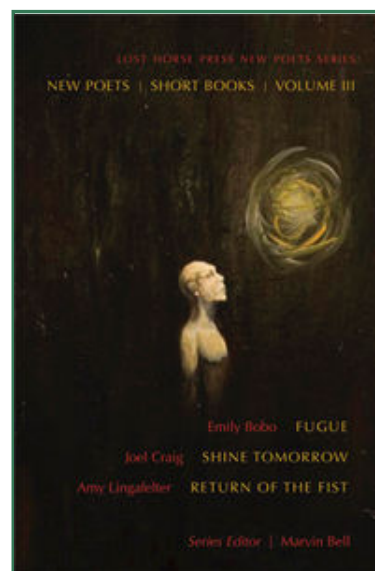
Lost Horse Press New Poets Series (Ed. Marvin Bell)

Sandpoint, Idaho: Lost Horse Press, 2009

978-0-9800289-2-8, paperback

74 pages, \$16.95

Lost Horse Press is a non-profit publisher of literary prose and poetry located near Sandpoint, Idaho. Their New Poets Series is edited by Marvin Bell, the distinguished author of many volumes of poetry and prose, Iowa's first Poet Laureate, teacher for almost 40 years at the Iowa Writers' Workshop, and now on the faculty at Pacific University in Oregon. This third volume in the series features three poets who deserve greater exposure: Emily Bobo, Joel Craig and Jennifer Lingafelter. The three writers chosen for this volume put to work Bell's introductory comment, "Nothing better illustrates the American character than the individualism inherent in art." These are poets who, in Bell's words, "push the envelope to express what matters."



Emily Bobo introduces her poem, *Fugue*, with both the term's musical and psychological definitions. Bobo's fugue is the progress of estrangement between the "recovering musician" and her piano. Bobo evokes empathy for her musician as the voices of musician, piano, mother, teacher and lover interplay, moving the poem to its resolution. But is anything ever completely resolved? The coda reveals a spore searching for "some tangled dysfunction to hold onto or lose itself in." This Indiana poet's language is thoughtful and the images resonate with the reader.

The second segment, *Shine Tomorrow*, is by Iowa-born Chicago resident, Joel Craig, who wishes each poem to "breathe for itself." His poetry entwines contemporary society and politics with the individual experience. In "Rational Irrational" he illustrates the involvement of the personal with the political through lines such as:

Add what extent do you feel it is justifiable
for someone else to control your personal behavior
if it contributes to the public benefit?
Add I have questions in one pocket & secrets in the other.
Add I've got nothing to hide.

Craig's poems also speak of interpersonal and domestic relationships and provide many statements to ponder. His forms are innovative and his poetry full of small surprises.

Amy Lingafelter, a school librarian, contributes the third segment, *Return of the Fist*. Her nine poems are unique and full of language surprising to the reader, who assumes the commonplace in a phrase before the sly alternative pops into consciousness. Because I read these poems during August harvest time, "The Summer I started Pickling Things" was an

immediate favorite. Imagine pickling a Volkswagen, a cell phone or Shame!

I look forward to reading more from these poets, whose lines merit further contemplation and re-reading. This poetry is accessible to all ages and would be enjoyed by teens on up, a good stimulus to one's personal creativity and a good choice for public libraries. Thanks are due to Lost Horse Press for this series as well as its other publications. Press owner Christine Holbert promotes literary events in Sandpoint and our library especially appreciates her work organizing our local young writer's workshops.

Gloria Ray is an administrative librarian at the Sandpoint branch of the East Bonner County Public Library District.

The Idaho Librarian is a publication of the [Idaho Library Association](#).