

White Champion: A Deep Dive into Donald Revell's Enigmatic and Lyrical Masterpiece



White Champion, the penultimate collection by Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Donald Revell, is a profound and enigmatic work that explores the intricate tapestry of existence. Through a series of lyrical and introspective poems, Revell delves into the depths of memory, desire, mortality, and the ever-elusive nature of truth.

White Champion by Donald Revell

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English

Paperback : 96 pages

Item Weight : 1.05 pounds



Dimensions	: 7 x 0.6 x 9 inches
File size	: 4537 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Print length	: 61 pages
Screen Reader	: Supported
Hardcover	: 192 pages



Exploring the Labyrinth of Memory

In "The Rim," Revell navigates the labyrinthine corridors of his memory, revisiting moments both tender and haunting. The past intertwines with the present, creating a fluid and dreamlike landscape where time seems to collapse. Through the vivid imagery of "a queen bee / her thorax studded with pollen" and "a woman's voice calling my name," Revell evokes the bittersweet nostalgia and the lingering resonance of past experiences.

"The Rim"

A queen bee
her thorax studded with pollen
came to rest
on the cornice of my father's house
a church, an ark,
where I was born
and where, one afternoon,
a woman's voice calling my name
across the playground
hurled me from the rim

of childish faith
into the unnameable world.

Desire's Elusive Embrace

Revell explores the intoxicating yet often elusive nature of desire in "The Promise." Through a series of fragmented images and haunting refrains, he captures the longing for connection and the bittersweet realization that fulfillment can often remain tantalizingly out of reach. The speaker's desire becomes a "shadowy / overture" that lingers in the "no-man's-land" between hope and despair.

"The Promise"

The shadowy overture
takes the shape
of a woman's legs
in a dark, sleeveless dress
and the promise
of lips parted
for a kiss
lingers in the no-man's-land
between want
and fear

Confronting the Inevitability of Mortality

Revell confronts the inevitability of mortality with unflinching honesty in "The White Campion." The titular flower, a symbol of both beauty and fragility, becomes a poignant reminder of the fleeting nature of life. Through vivid imagery and sparse language, Revell captures the bittersweet resignation that comes with the realization that time is slipping away.

"The White Champion"

The white champion
with its petals
delicate as thistledown
blossoms
and blossoms
by the side
of the road
and every year
I stop
to marvel
at its fragile
beauty
and every year
I remember
that I too
will one day
be gone

The Illusive Nature of Truth

Throughout White Champion, Revell questions the very nature of truth and the extent to which we can ever truly understand the world around us. In "The Question," he ponders the enigmatic nature of existence, where "the answer is / not a word but a question" and "the truth is / not a noun but a verb." His poems become explorations of the unknown, where certainty gives way to ambiguity and the search for meaning becomes an endless journey.

"The Question"

The answer is

not a word but a question

the truth is

not a noun but a verb

the world is

not a place but a process

and we are

not what we know

but what we seek.

White Champion is a challenging and rewarding work that defies easy categorization. Revell's introspective lyrics delve into the profound mysteries of life and death, memory and desire, and the elusive nature of truth. Through a language that is both lyrical and enigmatic, he invites readers on a transformative journey that will linger long after the last page is turned. As one critic eloquently put it, White Champion is "a book to be savored, a book to be puzzled over, a book to be returned to again and again."



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