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Book Review: Dipped in Black Water by Kate Peper

Katy Giebenhain · Wednesday, June 28th, 2017

 In her new chapbook Kate Peper brings us explorations of what is and is not in our control. *Dipped in Black Water* is sharp and compassionate. Instead of a voice, I would say Peper's writing has a pulse. And the pulse in each of these poems is strong and steady.

These poems are characterized by a welcome straightforwardness. They are nearly clinical in a way that is playful – clinical in the best sense: observant, unafraid of questions and without judgement. From “The Serial Killer’s Parents, Afterward” to “Textbook of Pathology” to the timeless layers of loss in “End Of The Line” to “Stone Baby” where “God’s lamp shone here / and still does” the poems do not skirt bittersweet realities. They engage. They name.

Readers will come away thinking differently of the Wall Street bull, the RCA terrier and the chromosomes that comprise us all. “View from the Jungfaujoch Railway Café” took my breath away. Peper knows she doesn’t need to add drama. She holds a situation for us and the drama is already there. She does not distract or exaggerate. This is a mature restraint. *Dipped in Black Water* is a well-written, lively collection.

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