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## Review: *Sapphires on the Graves* by Scott Ferry

George Franklin · Sunday, December 1st, 2024

### *Sapphires on the Graves*

by Scott Ferry

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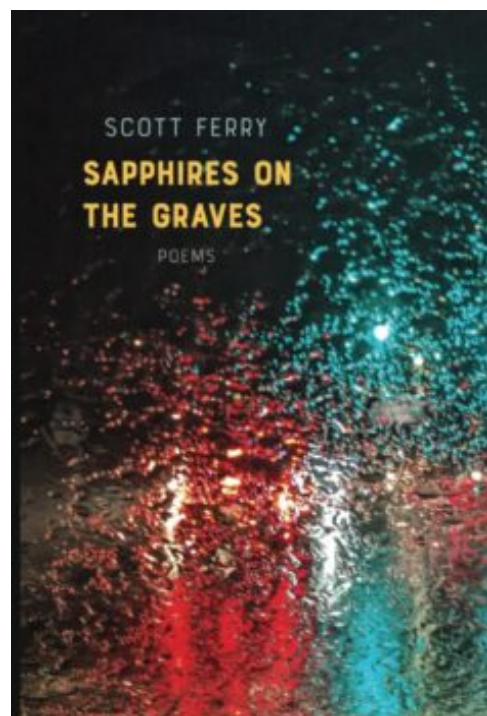
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A primary feature of literary romanticism was the discovery of the self as a subject to explore in poetry. Today, poets are, to a greater or lesser extent, still committed to that exploration. The poetic tools may be different, but the attempt is the same. We try to use poetry as a process, how the words emerge in our heads not from logical calculation but as the ungovernable product of imagination. These words are sought by us as we sit down with an intention to make a poem, but they come from somewhere beyond our intention. It is a space beyond our control and perhaps beyond ourselves. For 21st-century romantics, mapping that place of contradictory impulse and personal memory is the same task faced by Wordsworth and Coleridge.

*Sapphires on the Graves* by Scott Ferry is exactly this kind of romantic exploration. Ferry presents his poems in the form of prose paragraphs without capital letters or punctuation other than the forward-slash that signifies where a line break would fall if the poem were lineated and the double-forward-slash to indicate a larger break. The effect is to give the unbroken rush of conscious perception. We have been admitted to Ferry's mind, both conscious and unconscious, both the outside world as he encounters it and the inner world as he reflects on it and brings it into being.



The book begins with “guam,” a powerful sequence of eight poems. Ferry and his wife, daughter, and son have gone to Guam to visit his wife’s family. Travel, even if real, is often a metaphor for a movement into the unconscious. The poet/hero enters another culture or myth world from which he returns changed. Ferry does not emerge unscathed from his intrusion into Chamorro lands: on a swim, a piece of coral takes off most of the skin from his middle finger. Knowledge is not given for free. In a lesser collection, these Guam poems would be the climax of the book. Here, they are an introduction. They establish Ferry’s access to a dark interior world that collides, sometimes painfully, with the outside world of family and obligation. Ferry enters this other world in these initial poems, but it travels with him throughout the book. Perhaps, it was always there, and what he encountered in Guam was just a physical manifestation. Regardless, he is haunted by it, and much of what we, as readers, overhear is how he manages to cope.

I used the word “cope,” but poetry is not an easy therapy. If it heals, it heals by way of exposing us to the brutal and the ugly, to all the parts of ourselves and others that we wish we could pass over quickly. What is most moving in this collection is Ferry’s refusal to pretend that there are simple answers, that love or beauty can be experienced without the experience of their opposites. In the third section of “guam,” he shows us both:

the boonie dogs congregate on the corner of maimai road / creatures only the seasons own /  
 one limps its back leg a swollen red fist / i ask my wife who grew up here if she still notices  
 the clouds / gold stretching from shimmering bay to the rolling heights / she says not really /  
 maybe sometimes / when i drive through chalan pago a rooster reclines in the road / his eyes  
 searching for an escape his crushed legs can’t deliver / he seems to ask that i spare him but  
 when i return an hour later through a gentle spit of rain / through tangantangan and paipai  
 trees / the bird’s head no longer sees anything but has become a place for water and feather  
 and iron to coalesce / i take pictures of clouds but none of them capture the immense weight  
 or the lifting / every time i pass the corner i search for the limping dog without any faith that  
 i will find any faith

The book’s title comes from the poem “Sparkle,” where Ferry takes the reader inside his need to mythologize as a way to understand himself. He recalls a time when this kind of life was not necessary for him, “back when i could just be unholy walking with the thunder and the broken psalms.” Now, however, “broken and faithless,” he “must collect each strand of light as it falls and weave it into my splayed chest.” Ferry tells us that he must do this because “i have to laugh with my children / because i have to show them there is music on the black waters / that there are sapphires on all the graves.”

Literary romanticism can also be a return to the poem as prophecy and the poet as prophet. Ferry is as unashamed of this role as William Blake or D.H. Lawrence. The role of the poet/prophet is to find a language for precisely those experiences and thoughts that are hardest, if not impossible, to put into words. As a result, prophetic books are difficult, and *Sapphires on the Graves* is not an exception. We can hear the echoes of backstories for the poems, but they are given to us as features of the poet’s interior being, not as a narrated series of events. The reader must explore the darkness with Ferry; we are not allowed to jump ahead to a position of stability and light; we are not allowed, in Ezra Pound’s phrase, to “get through Hell in a hurry....”

A great deal of the darkness in these poems is fear, fear that Ferry is not present for his children, or if he is present, that he is not the man he would like to be. He asks in “hush,”  
 “when did everything become terrifying? / fear of fear of fear of fear / i am more afraid of

the insects under my sleep than of the actual sting and swelling.” Later in the same poem, he questions, “i can comfort my children / why can i not comfort myself?” This is, in fact, the central question of the collection: if we allow ourselves to see the darkness that permeates our lives, if we are committed to that truth, how can we ever know whether we are truly good?

This is a problem inherent in romanticism, which exists in the space between our subjective consciousness and the contingent world full of wars and disease. Can our suffering, troubled world be redeemed by beauty, or is this only a fantasy? Ferry is in much the same position as Keats was in his famous ode. Keats acknowledges that old age and death will waste his generation, but the urn (“Cold Pastoral!”), an art that endures past human life, will still proclaim “Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.” Ferry’s poem “romantics” reaffirms this faith, even as he reminds us of the darkness that challenges it:

i post pictures of roses on facebook / there are many times when the idea that beauty can heal helps me believe i am doing something / i post my words / maybe i need a dopamine hit when the likes come in / maybe i feel that the ghosts need to be naked against white / i don’t do much but listen to what haunts me / there is too much to write / endless connections under the loathing / the inside of the cave a carbon shell / citrine and alexandrite / there are many times when the smell of the words have no power / there are many times when the roses look much better in pixels / the grecian urn / love always in tension but always undigested / images frozen in a fake tableau / everything i should have felt or said or done / but the roses fall / the chances are deleted / ozymandias swallowed by sand / keats and shelley my first stars in a distant and sealed movie set / the scripts are fantastic but the actors die in a shakespearean fifth act but only in the second act / i still hold faith that beauty is truth / truth beauty / somewhere an adolescent takes a photo of something beautiful / thinks it will save him from the loss of all faith / the desks full of dead children / the sky full of black fire

*Sapphires on the Graves* is a book built around this juxtaposition, the poet’s love for his family and the beauty of this world on the one hand and the reality of injury, illness, depression, and death on the other. The challenge to Ferry, who in his daily life is a nurse working with veterans, is how to endure. Self-exploration is Ferry’s answer to that challenge, and the collection is evidence of his survival. The poet may not be healed or even reconciled to the world, but he does find a kind of triumph, a way of continuing and perhaps even a hope for healing. In the book’s final poem, “twin,” he discovers an anima figure in himself, a feminine other, and tells us:

she is a soft thing in me that has survived / she has grown flowers out of her many heads / flourished next to the archetypes and models of gender / sang into rivers and oceans my many glowing tears / at night when i feel frightened / she holds my bones together in her hands.

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Check out [two poems by Scott Ferry](#), previously published in Cultural Daily

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# How to Find the Perfect E-Liquid Flavor to Compliment Your Vaping Style

Our Friends · Saturday, November 30th, 2024

Choosing the right e-liquid flavor is one of the primary steps in satisfaction with vaping. Since there are many different options available on the market these days, sometimes it can be a kind of overwhelming problem, especially for complete beginners. The right flavor can greatly enhance enjoyment while an incorrect choice may lead to dissatisfaction. Various points discussed herein will enable you in choosing the e-liquid flavor that best suits your style of vaping.

## Understanding Your Preferences

First and foremost, the selection of the flavor regarding e-liquids is all about knowing one's taste. Much as different types of food or drinks would be selected by people, different flavor inclinations normally exist in every person. Some may like sweet fruity flavors, while others might prefer dessert or tobacco-based flavors. Take the time to reflect upon your usual preferences in other aspects of your life regarding food and beverages. If you have a sweet tooth for candies or pastries, then the dessert e-liquid would more likely fit best for you. Those who enjoy the freshness of fruits may more naturally flow into preferring a fruity or citrus-based e-liquid. It's about finding the kind of flavor you are most likely to enjoy.

## Nicotine and Nicotine-Free E-Liquids: Making a Choice

Another important aspect in the selection of e-liquid is whether you will go with a nicotine-containing solution or not. The nicotine-based e-liquids are quite popular among the people getting switched from smoking to vaping, as they provide a similar experience to smoking traditional cigarettes. As a new vaper looking to quit smoking, you might want to start with a nicotine-containing e-liquid. Other people would settle for those without nicotine, maybe because they have quit or would simply want to enjoy the flavor without the addictive product. Most vape product manufacturers of repute, including Vapresso and Naked 100, offer both nicotine and nicotine-free options. This gives you leeway to make the adjustment as your needs may dictate.

## Brand Reputation and Ingredient Quality

Finally, one should not forget brand reputation regarding e-liquids and quality ingredients. Well-known brands, like **Kraze Vape**, guarantee high-quality products because they are made from ingredients of good standards within the industry. Opting for popular brands means you vape with safe and quality products. This would mean a lot when it comes to something you take in through inhalation. There are literally scores of variations in e-liquids, which range between those that are very bad to others that are excellent. As such, one has to make sure he or she selects only products from trusted manufacturers to avoid associated risks with low-quality alternatives.

## Considering VG and PG Ratios

Besides what was mentioned above, another decision that you will make when it comes to choosing e-liquids is the VG/PG ratio. Vegetable Glycerin (VG) and Propylene Glycol are two major active ingredients of e-liquids that create the vapor upon heat by your vape device. One is VG, which is sweeter and thicker, whereas PG is thinner and gives that kick to the throat just like cigarette smoking. If you like great big clouds of vapor, you want to go with a higher VG ratio; it's

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smooth and it's more substantial vapor. If you are looking for more of that throat hit, then you want a higher PG content. Well worth the experimentation to find that one suited for your vaping style.

## Intensity and Complexity of Flavor

Some e-liquids may be made for a single, simple flavor, while others can be more complex, mingling numbers of tastes in one bottle. Besides, there's the intensity of the flavor-the strong and bold flavors that stay on the tongue, for some vapers at least, and at the other end of the scale, subtle, less overpowering options. Being a complete newb in vaping, you might want to go with a single-note flavor, mint, vanilla, or strawberry-as they are more recognizable and easy to handle. Only when one gains enough experience in vaping can those complicated combinations that combine, say, tobacco with caramel or fruits with menthol, be tried. One needs to find the right balance between flavor intensity and complexity that fits his own personal taste.

Finally, choosing the right e-liquid flavor is quite personal, wherein, really, there is not one size that fits all. Now, base your decision on your taste preferences, your nicotine needs, and VG/PG ratio. Go ahead and make an educated decision that best fits your individual style, considering other aspects like brand reputation. You might need to try different flavors before getting the one that perfectly fits your needs. Remember, vaping is all about enjoying it. Married to the right e-liquid, one's vaping sessions could be sincerely flavorful, enjoyable, and satisfying parts of the day.

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