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Tripping With The Top Down — Poet Ellaraine Lockie Hits The Road

Sarah W. Bartlett · Tuesday, May 2nd, 2017



TRIPPING WITH THE TOP DOWN

by Ellaraine Lockie

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In signature style, Ellaraine Lockie's *Tripping With The Top Down* leads with the senses, traveling from the sensual to the edgy. We are invited into Lockie's own, felt world, often carried to the very edge, and then left to fend for ourselves. Wit, wordplay, layered nuance, literary allusion, cultural context, linguistic gymnastics – all are employed by Lockie to compel us to join in the journey, a road trip that takes the reader through shady city corners and wide open prairie, a dazzling array of experiences that sometimes pushes the surreal.

Lockie takes us on a visitor's tour of Los Angeles – sometimes, as unsuspecting tourists, to less than savory locations. She bridges worlds through a personal and often intimate lens, where suspense is key. There are wonderful portrait-poems that clearly showcase the poet's ability to make the ordinary extraordinary, holding up a mirror to what is missed or mistaken in our daily routines, celebrating subtle twists that challenge assumptions, excelling at both the unexpected moment and the deeply personal.

“Offerings to the Green Gods” sits at the fulcrum of the collection. Here we experience the absolute juxtaposition of the natural world upon the human-made, a welcome reversal of the conqueror: rather than paving a field to make a parking lot, a plot of ground is tilled to bring living growth and beauty to the pavement. A hopeful return.

And what a return it is! The back-to-back pairing of “Coming Home in a Haibun” and “First Time to Montana” shifts gears to a serenity absent in the city poems. Clearly, this is where Lockie's heart and soul find nourishment, where she is most at home. Both poems invite the reader into Lockie's beloved Montana landscape with both the experienced heart of a lover and the understanding vision of a newcomer.

From the smoggy city to the wild prairie, from the tawdry to the sultry, the mundane to the

spiritual, the innocent to the unbalanced, within the paradoxes of life emerges a web of connection, evident within the pages of *Tripping With The Top Down*, where there is something for everyone. Not because Lockie attempts to speak to everyone, but because she speaks from her heart, and her own rich experience.

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