



The Insistence of Beauty

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"Beauty isn't nice. Beauty isn't fair;" So, in part, states an epigraph for this stunning new collection, his thirteenth, by the Pulitzer Prize winner for Poetry (2000). First traversing betrayal and loss, Stephen Dunn then moves to speak of new love, with its attendant pleasures and questioning. The title poem, perhaps emblematic of the book as a whole, is evocative of beauty's often surprising manifestations even in the light of tragedy; as on that terrible day "when those silver planes came out of the perfect blue." Because beauty jars us, makes us look twice, it is as startling as a good poem, and as insistent. Fortunately, it is never too late to search for the right words for what we've seen, felt, endured. With quiet authority Dunn enacts what it feels like to be a particular man at a particular juncture of his life; struggling not to deny, but to name, then rename.

The Insistence of Beauty Details

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Author : Stephen Dunn

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From Reader Review The Insistence of Beauty for online ebook

Skdecker says

I don't read much poetry. This one has a few images that stayed with me, but not a masterwork. May reflect more on the reader than the poet.

Kasandra says

Really well-done, understated poems that in their clarity and apparent simplicity utter truths you feel you not only have known but also have right on the tip of your tongue, and Dunn has kindly reminded you as well as spoken them for you. His poems on cheating in a marriage or serious relationship are some of the best I've read, they make you both detest and empathize with the speaker at the same time, quite a feat. The title poem, referencing 9/11, is fantastic. Recommended.

Suzi says

The poems "Juarez" and "The House is Quiet" are amazing poems, but there are a few others, both of "The Answers" which just are not that good.

Julene says

This is the second book I've read by Stephen Dunn. I enjoy his writing and enjoyed this book. What I especially like is his dialogue poems. In a talk I attended on the use of contradictions in poetry to increase tension, Stephen Dunn was used as one of the examples and now I want to read his book of essays. He said, "A poem must contain the shadow of its affirmation." He also said he argues with himself when he composes and that he resists where the poem wants to go. He is a very skilled poet who I want to learn from.

C says

I feel a bit strange for giving out so many 5-star ratings so far....

But I absolutely loved this collection. I can't really think of a better meditation on not only beauty, but love and destruction and the intertwined reasons for each. I truly recommend this one to my friends who don't typically read a lot of poetry. I think many of you would find yourselves liking it (I'm looking particularly at you, Tony and Georgette).

"Plain" language that manages to bring across a much deeper meaning.

Georgette says

It's been a long time since I've read poetry, and admittedly I may be out of practice. I liked it ... There were a handful of standouts, and overall I enjoyed the images. The thought of the rescue dog has stayed with me for more than a day now, and I'm not sure I want to shake it yet...

Peter says

Truth

Anina says

i loved this

Annemarlene Risch says

I like his earlier book better.

Alina Borger says

I liked a lot of the poems in this book--enough to buy it, so my three-star-rating is not to denigrate the book in any way. But I found the more I read, the more distant I felt from the speaker, and I didn't like that. I stayed with it and am happy to be uncomfortable as I read a poem (that's half the point, right?)--but I wouldn't necessarily re-read many of the poems in this book, which is my measure of a five-star book.

IE says

Strong sense of narrative, simple language, and a good number of eager, brilliant lines scattered here and there. Dunn is especially good with endings. They are often clean, elegant, and open, just the way I like them. For example:

Four starlings
on a telephone wire, an oak's bare branches—
no, not architecture, only a kind of evidence.
(from Winter)

The "The Answers" poems, however, are baaaaad. Please, peel them off your copy.

Tyler Jones says

I like this book for personal reasons. These poems are like confessions a close friend might make if you both had drunk enough that you could pretend later that nothing was said or heard. Unflinching.

Some books you read like you are visiting a foreign city on vacation. I think this book has set up house in my spare room and is going to live with me until it, not me, decides it has had enough.

I have no idea if you will like it or not.

Greg says

I like Dunn a lot and this collection was not a disappointment.

Kirsten says

Sorry but this collection was about as vanilla as it gets.

Kent says

I appreciate the sentiment, and the complexity of the emotion surrounding these poems. How is one supposed to leave behind something that was taken for granted, but was still dear. The narratives here are always engaging and honest.
