

Menu

Home About BWQ Issues Around the World ∨ Advice ∨ Poetry

News Briefs Reading ∨ Research Corner

Menu

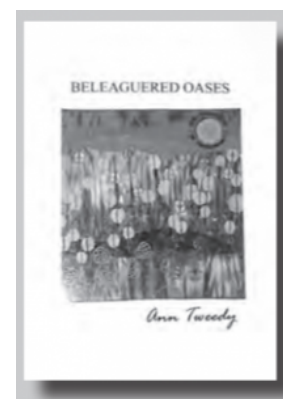
REVIEW: Beleaguered Oases by Ann Tweedy

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Review by Lena Judith Drake

When I received my review copy of Ann Tweedy's *Beleaguered Oases*, I sincerely hoped that I would enjoy the poetry, because did not want to write a scathing critique. I was not disappointed. In fact, I devoured these beleaguered poems while furiously taking notes about my future review on the back of the oversized index card sent with the copy of the book.

These are good poems. Very, very good poems. Divided into three sections, "The Body," "Many Oases," and "Immersed," these poems describe bodies and landscapes in complex relationships through honest details. Yes, some of these are nature poems, but not maudlin depictions of grassy knolls and birds twittering. This is nature—more like human nature, which just might be animal nature. This is clear in the depictions of small moments in sexuality, like in "Newts" and "Licking the Glue."



The poems are a much-needed addition to the community of bisexual/fluid-sexual writing. The poem "Fruit" speaks of marginalized people, hopeless things, and mundane miracles—and who better to understand margins than those in between them? "Lit Rooms" talks of the desire of small creatures—insects, arachnids, humans. "Word Games" encompasses polyamorous talk in hindsight, complexly and without shock value. "Kilter" celebrates the body of a lover, celebrates sex as abundance: "... the jut / of my pelvis like the current-scoured / stone you palmed before we met..." (44). "A Few Minutes at the Beach" is my favorite, with sad and visceral details, mastectomy, suicide, the things that tear us apart in life, the same things that make us want to cling together.

Tweedy asks a question to which many readers, bisexual and otherwise, may relate: "do you think I could write myself back into / the hewn dimensions of any single space?" (42). Tweedy's writing, encompassing of many places and feelings, cannot, but I would never ask it to.

Beleaguered Oases can be ordered at www.anntweedypoetry.com. Lena is the editor-in-chief of Breadcrumb Scabs magazine (www.breadcrumbscabs.com). For personal information, or her own poetry, visit her at lenajudith.sedentarygecko.com.

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