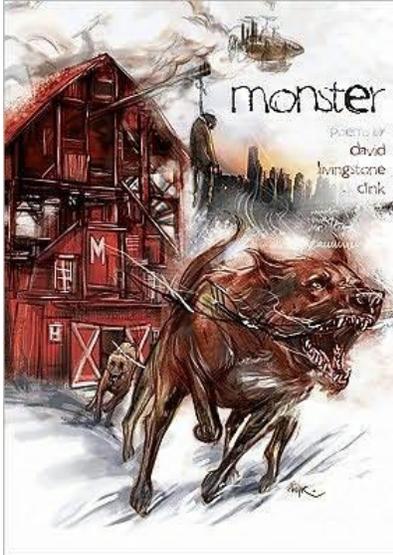


Monster by David Livingstone Clink

by Serena on May 20, 2011

<http://savvyverseandwit.com/2011/05/monster-by-david-livingstone-clink.html>



Monster by [David Livingstone Clink](#), published by small publisher [Tightrope Books](#), is a collection broken into five parts and is dedicated to those who “dreamed of monsters under the bed.” What an appropriate dedication, as there is an undercurrent of menace to some of these poems. Beyond the shapeshifters, the aliens, and the other monsters that go bump in the night, Clink is drawing out the mischief and the darkness within each of us. While we are human, there is a baser nature beneath the civility that he calls attention to, warning us to remain wary and yet accepting of that nature.

In “Pantomim for a Recent Kill” (page 36), the narrator highlights the need of humanity to categorize even dead bodies, to shape them within a context, providing them meaning even if no meaning exists. While we want to examine these corpses (whether they are literal or figurative) in great detail and pose them as we see fit, we also shy away from the pleasure of it and of acknowledging this darker desire to get involved on our basest level. “In putting an end to something braver than us/cut the corpse into small pieces. Bury it deep/and turn away with relief that this isn’t you.//” Additionally, readers may notice a slight disdain in the lines chosen by Clink; the narrator seems to be sarcastic about the actions of the denier who “buries it deep.” Perhaps Clink is discussing the corpses of our past selves or the past selves mentioned throughout history and lore, but no matter which corpses he is referring to, it is clear that he wants to break through the fear of self-examination.

Above Us (page 50)

-after Julia Hartwig's 'Above Us'

Running until they are tired, out of space,
boys cast shadows in the dwindling light

of a vast square, the soccer ball bouncing,
ending this day with awe and consolation.

This completes another cycle in dying—
the boys turn home, talk excitedly,

the soccer ball having its own language
that had to be kicked out of it to be heard.

Moving through the parts of the collection, readers will note a progression in the narration from the fantastical to the more concrete, but even in these different poems the undercurrent of menace and darkness continues. However, the narration changes from a questioning of its existence to a denial of its existence to an acceptance. From “The Airships Take Us, Even as We Blow Out the Last Candle” (page 27), “The darkness did not come on like a tarantula./It was always here./It is penetrated by man-made machines/muscling into the night,/by two young women on a downtown bus/with blue streaks in their hair, whispering,/Calvary, and, Hosanna./”

Through playful language and use of creative poetic forms (from [pantoum](#) to cross-reading — “Weathered Remains” on page 24 being one of the best cross-reading poems in the collection), Clink will make readers take pause to rethink each line and their own preconceptions about their humanity, while at the same time celebrating what makes us human in the darkness. Overall, Clink’s use of language and poetic form in [Monster](#) creates a surreal malaise that readers will swim in, searching for an exit but enticed to stay to uncover the dark truth about themselves. A dark truth that is worth knowing so that they can move beyond it to a more mindful life. Another winner in poetry for the year.

About the Poet:

His first book of poetry was released from Tightrope Books in the Spring of 2008. It is called “Eating Fruit Out of Season.”

David is a member of The League of Canadian Poets. Check out his Website, [Poetry Machine](#).