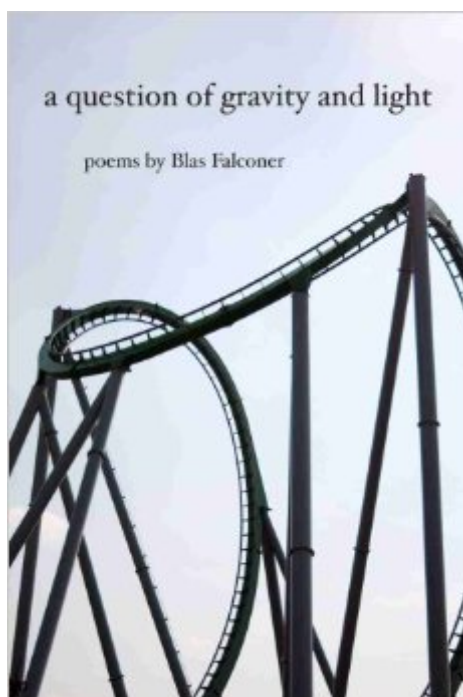


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A Question Of Gravity And Light (Camino Del Sol)



Synopsis

It is rare to find contemporary American poetry that speaks to readers with engaging directness, free of pretense or posturing. That is exactly the kind of poetry that Blas Falconer writes. In his first collection, Falconer presents 46 poems that are emotionally forthright and linguistically evocative but written without affectation or subterfuge. Although Falconer is formally trained and is aware of the structures and potential of both free verse and traditional poetic forms, he crafts exquisite, heartfelt poems that surprise us with their simple intensity. Whether writing about the mysteries of childhood or the pleasures of cruising for gay sex in a metropolitan airport, he surprises us with the delicacy of his touch, never obvious or heavy-handed. As a gay man who embraces his Puerto Rican heritage, Falconer stands at an edge of American society, and there is the tension of borders in his work: borders between peoples and nations as well as the less visible, more porous and deceptive borders between family members and lovers. There is not one point of view in these poems but many. It is the quality of their observational power that binds them together. Whether the setting is the hospital room of his dying grandfather or his own backyard teeming with garrulous tree frogs, Falconer transports us to the scene. It is easy for us to imagine what he sees. And we care, deeply, just as he does.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In the book's opening poem, "Dead Reckoning," the poet makes us aware that he has prepared for

the journey he will take us on when he says "the morning woke up dark and tired." This tells us that the speaker was up before morning, watching the day come alive. As the reader explores with Falconer the subjects of loss, restoration and transformation, she may proceed with the knowledge that her host has been thoughtful, has looked both behind and ahead for those moments that are worth taking a closer look at. "A Question of Gravity and Light" includes poems from Falconer's debut chapbook, "The Perfect Hour." Since I have already reviewed the chapbook (search for Blas Falconer "The Perfect Hour" on to find that collection and my review), I will not touch on any of those poems in this review. Falconer has a great talent for expression through imagery. In "Lament" the subject of the poem "[closes] a door on a field of fireflies." At the end of the poem the reader will find the subject waking up, wondering where the last day has gone, how it passed. Notice, though, how with the concise image of closing a door on a field of fireflies, the poet points out how actively, however unconscious it may seem, we pass up opportunities for awe, magic, things that are rare and exceptional--how responsible we are for the loss of our own time. Nowhere is Falconer's use of imagery stronger than in "A Story of Winter." This is, quite simply, a powerful poem. The music is very appealing, the tone and rhythm are careful, and the voice is clear yet just understated enough to avoid imposing itself on the poem. What exactly is going on in "A Story of Winter" is unclear. There is snow, a piano, some candles burning. The snow increases and diminishes.

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