

Apperception is about the assimilation of the poet's life-experience, her unrequited love relation and her quest for love. The book describes the inner changes the poet experiences as she transforms her repressed emotions into poems. The opening poem refers to a metaphor that sets the tone: "The boat journey turned out to be as unsettling / as my fugues' fantasized mutability." In the book, the dreaming poet vanquishes her foreboding dreams that intuit the pandemic. She realizes that the lockdown made us more vulnerable. We became more dependent on each other. We dreamed extensively to express our repressed desires. We returned as the repressed. The poet's dreams became poems.

By the end of *Apperception*, the integration of experience makes us grow into life with an acquired resilience. The poet imagines the onset of a new order based on peace, social justice, and the amelioration of our relations with animals and with each other. In the "Dream Cadence" the poet attempts to reach the light within the ideal order she has created in her book. Thus, the dream becomes "a wish fulfilled, the poems palimpsest" and palliates the quarantined day.

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In *Apperception*, Emily Bilman explores the deepest recesses of her life experience to find insights into the world. A creative writer can gain a deep insight into the future through the sensitive evaluation of the present moment. By expressing what is most intimate the poet can express what is most universal. Poets like Emily Dickinson who are seemingly most removed from the world have the deepest perception of its nature.

In *Apperception*, we read this line in "Ode To Sleep": "O sleep, ferment my night with dreams". Throughout history, dreams have allowed the dreamer a glimpse into the future. Before the beginning of the First World War, Henry James wrote: "I have the imagination of disaster and see life as ferocious and sinister." Just as writers have had forebodings of war and disaster, it is possible for a writer to have foreboding dreams of a pandemic which can lead to the paralysis of life that we have known. In "Time's Disintegration", the poet imagines that "Time will be stretched" and distorted during lockdown as it is in dreams. There is some evidence that people in lockdown have experienced an enhanced dream life. Poems and dreams enable us to assimilate and create a wholeness out of the disparate aspects of experience. The pandemic is described through bitter social satire in ekphrastic terms so we can discern our wrongs and build a more humane society.

Apperception an important book which addresses the most urgent questions of our age. The book reminds the reader that it only by confronting the darker aspects of ourselves and, by extension, the darker aspects of our world, that we can reach the light. Paradoxically, it is by delving deeply into one's childhood that the future can be viewed clearly. As Wordsworth said "the child is father to man". In the book, our discords finally merge into a loving harmony in "Transformations". We see the world as if from the very dawn of consciousness:

The sun plays hide and seek with
the light in the orchard bursting
with sweet nectar the salmon velvet
peaches ready for the new harvest.

James Knox Whittet, former President of Suffolk Poetry Society



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poetry