

JANE MUNRO

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READER GUIDE for *GLASS FLOAT*

Hello readers! Thanks for reading *Glass Float*.

The iceberg of consciousness ...

Once, I asked workshops of undergraduate and graduate poetry students to complete the following statement: “Learning to write poetry is like”

The undergrads chose similes involving eyes and hands and minds. They said writing poetry is like “making a patchwork quilt” or “looking for something in the junk drawer.”

The grads said learning to write poetry is like “swimming naked in the dark” or “being blindfolded and guided by a dwarf through a strange house.” For them, the whole body was involved, they couldn’t see where they were going, and it felt risky.

In the iceberg of consciousness, the vaster realm lies beneath the surface of day-to-day thought.

Saturday afternoons, my grandfather gave me painting lessons. The prose poem that begins *Glass Float* ends with one of his dictums. “Art is suggestion; art is not representation.”

Do you agree?

Deepening your attention: *You cannot energize what is not relaxed ...*

Faeq Biria once told us in a yoga intensive that “you cannot energize what is not relaxed.”

When you attend to something in a relaxed state, it can become all you notice. The poem moving through you, taking form in your words, becomes itself as it is your experience.

When you’re sucked into something, does it relax and refresh you? Do you read for pleasure?

Making the dark visible ...

Physicists tell us reality is oddly subtle. What’s present and apparent is alive with dark matter.

If a poem is an energy moving through you into language – something latent becoming kinetic, a thrust manifesting as a ball that could thunk into a catcher’s mitt, your whole body is going to feel you receive that energy.

If the yogis are right, and you cannot energize what is not relaxed – to go deeper with poetry, you need to relax.

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What happens inside you when you read something like this?

in winter, the gods shed head gear
and garlands, sandals and spears, limbs
and vendettas – they shed names

honed to weightlessness, they flare
and drift, rise, buckle, fold – explode
from a hierarchical operatic cast

the thinned mesh of their turning
sparkles and floats – holds a delta's silt
lifts with snow geese, falls on peaks

Good luck with *Glass Float*.

I knew this was risky, but I did write it for you. I very sincerely hope you enjoy it.

Jane Munro