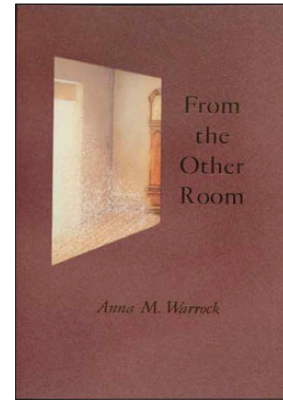


**From the Other Room**  
by Anna M. Warrock  
(Slate Roof 2017)

*Review by Doug Holder*



The first thing I noticed about Somerville, Mass. Poet Anna. M. Warrock's new collection of poetry "From the Other Room," was the physical book itself. Usually I merely glance at a book cover, but this was like love at first sight; I stopped to admire its simple beauty. The craftsmanship was at such a level, that it reminded of the many finely crafted books put out by Gary Metras' Adastra Press that-- like Slate Roof-- is located in Western, Massachusetts. Slate Roof is a small, collaborative press that published art-quality poetry books—the poetry that is between the covers in this case is more than worthy of its design.

I am in my early sixties so I can easily identify with what Warrock writes about. As the acclaimed poet Martin Espada opined, "Warrock speaks the the language of grief with eloquence and courage. She understands that experience of death changes the experience of life." It usually takes someone with a little mileage to crack this nut open to the readers.

In her poem "Spring's Lament" the poet looks at a greening April tree, and sees the dark shadows below the nascent leaves. She understand how life and death are close dance partners, and indeed there may be a welcoming balm, and some forgiveness under Spring's incessant bloom,

*So a tree turns green and green and green.  
Then there's the shade.*

*I will not let go of that, the shadow under the tree,  
dark, deep and forgiving.*

*Forgiven. That's what I mean, forgiven. (2)*

Warrock captures a strikingly beautiful moment in the poem "Looking into her Death." This is when a young girl ( Warrock—I assume) looks into her mother's hidden cupboard, and sees the luminous glasses on the shelf in a lineup of sorrow, waiting to be poured, to forestall their own demise—a perfect metaphor of absence-- for loss—for death...

*... The glasses, stacked neatly,  
become luminous on the shelves.  
By opening the door, I shed light  
on their curves, their brittleness.  
They are so clear I can see the dust  
caught on their transparent sides.  
Standing there, I realize they are waiting.  
The glasses do not know my mother*

## Wilderness House Literary Review 12/1

*is dead, so they wait for hands  
to take them down, fill them with  
beer or juice or milk. Then  
her hands will wash them,  
her hands will put them away.  
"She is dead," I say softly, "she is dead."*

Warrock has long been on the Boston area poetry scene. Her poems have appeared in the Harvard Review, The Madison Review and elsewhere. Her poems have been performed at the Boston Hayden Planetarium, and permanently installed in a Boston area subway station. The reader gets the whole package here, the beautiful physical book and the poems (to use a cliché)...at times left me breathless.