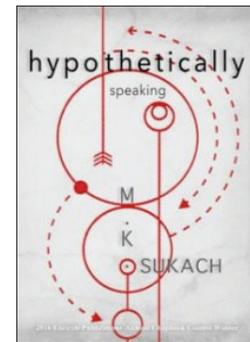


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Hypothetically Speaking
By M.K. Sukach
Encircle Publications, LLC
Farmington, Maine
28 Pages



Review by Dennis Daly

Just sayin. Apocalypse by Raptors. Toasting Death.
Scatological Pledge. Hell's Bill. Mindless Breathing.
Cataclysmic Ponder. Robotic Hearts. Just sayin.

Poems of wrath and dire suppositions dare us to awaken and live darkly in *Hypothetically Speaking*, M.K. Sukach's new collection of fractured visions. This poet knows how to destroy with graven logic and malefic lyric. Never close enough for out- -and-out rage, Sukach sets up his alternate universes with a dastardly sharp and shifting wit, enticing us down some pretty idiosyncratic narrative paths.

The book's opening piece, *Abaddon*, damns hypocritical politicians and their financial enablers to hell. Niceties of detail abound. Connections to reality are alluded to. Brood on these lines for a moment,

*...they moaned as lobbyists were crushed
under oaken tables adorned with feathered quills
and hand-lathed legs broken at the knees, sir, my oath
we didn't pass the bill, filibustered over tee-time deals,
last one then two then three uncapped their pens
and signed each other with love, I raise you, so help me
god, I raise you, as the nave cracked from bow to stern,
the conclave turned as moths to a light to cross their bodies,
in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti, so nakedly
were they decended upon by raptors and it was done.*

In *The Little Book of Anxieties* Sukach deals with life's concerns through art. Needless to say, his little poetic book, burning with passion and a blinding insight, tries the physical faculties of the reader beyond both critical and painful misjudgments. The poem begins in a blaze,

*If all the pages are on fire,
well then, that's a difficulty,*

*but you can't read it
otherwise, e.g., each*

*gracile nerve ending
sprained at the fingertip,*

*which pressed to the tongue
returns to the book*

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*by rote, just suffers and suffers
no matter the healing*

water...

Through the very strange prism of a frog dissection, Sukach, in his poem entitled *Formaldehyde*, eyes the messiness of human emotion and the first stirrings of love. Maybe not so strange. The teenage years with trial and error, unseemly moments and hand-wringing shame certainly seemed like a frog dissection, come to think of it. Biology lab conveyed a lot,

*Glossy gardens of urogenital systems,
Wet blossoms and what the cloaca does,
Pages of diagnostic manuals turning
Silent as a novice's prayer book at night;
One of us forgets and licks his index
Finger, dollops of saliva, room of laughter
Chalked up to digestive compulsion to name
Unnamable, unspeakable amphibian things:
Vena Cava, Spermatic Canal, Dorsal Aorta,
Yuck of frog sex, Jeanie's first kiss, mutely waiting*

Sukach's piece, *Porno Star as CIA Operative*, accurately comments on two professions. For both the star and the operative cover is everything. An allusion to "Leave It to Beaver" works diabolically well. The poet describes the scenario,

*It's all a bit of tradecraft, really, uncanny
Cunning, the way she was always leaving
Arriving so easily, so imperceptibly made up
There were never any clouds in her afternoons
Weird like June Cleaver always gardening in her pearls
So perfectly cartoonish like politics and porn
A "plumber" arrives but her pipes are never fixed
Really, how many of us ever made it whining about the rules*

What a great last line. What a profound eternal truth.

Wakes puzzle together the "Loved One," each relative adding a piece to be pushed in to place. A mosaic obit. Sukach's poem *Quotient* does this. The restored life reeks with hyperbole or wit or tut tuts. Illusion can capture the truth, which skipped out on flesh and blood. Understatement spreads with the vigor of the nod, always knowing. The poet concludes the piece in search of a lubricant,

*...the aunt
who "availed" herself
was "apparently" and often
"intimate" but left
no "offspring"*

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*yet so "colorful"
remarks in passing
uncles reappearing
from rooms and closets
into the whole
contemplative portrait
looking for more booze*

I'm all for starting at the beginning, at a conjured childhood. That is why Sukach's piece *A is for Apple* pleases me so much. Continuing the story from its onset the poet's protagonist finds his way through life's thicket, following a zigzag "remedial" path. He recognizes his shortcomings here,

*A is for aphasic and anomia. So I write
with a dictionary and cheat through (a) thesaurus
because A is for ambiguous and amphigory.
A is a grade and grade A is aleatory.
With any luck no one will mark you a "B"
then cart you off to an institution
with all the other crack ups
muttering A is for Effort.*

Red-eyed zombies downing Starbucks coffee at Reagan National take center stage in Sukach's poem of inconsolable patterns, *Crossword*. The poet, connecting the dots, quotes Aristotle, "No matter where you go there you are." Muttered opprobrium rules the day. Cue the flight attendants,

*who instruct us
on how to save ourselves with flotation devices,
those silly cups of oxygen that drop and dangle
just before the plane broadsides into a mountain,
smile antiseptically as if everything is okay
and complementary and for our own good*

Just sayin. Abrupt Ends. Ditch Drunk. Pearl Onions Forked. Scaled Back Compassion. Chum Frenzy. Labyrinthine Sewer. Piggyback Conspiracies. Just sayin.

Put down the sparklers and read this damn book.