

Wilderness House Literary Review 12/1

Nothing Important Happened Today
poetry by **Claudia Serea**
Paperback: 148 pages
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Reviewed by R.G. Rader



When entering the world of Claudia Serea through her book of poems, *Nothing Important Happened Today*, the reader is immersed in the ordinary and the extraordinary. From intimate, stark snapshots of life in Romania to the intimate interrogations of the inner struggle of the poet's life in new circumstances as an immigrant in New York City, she takes the reader along with her into a world that exhibits the simplicity of our daily lives and imbues them with a generosity of spirit and depth. The common is extraordinary; the extraordinary is familiar, and the reader is compelled to look more deeply into his or her life for that special mix that confirms the value of a life, no matter how unadorned it might be:

*Light moves across lawns,
over hydrangeas, zinnias, and yews,
light climbs the walls
and trickles inside rooms,
it tangles in curtains
and hangs in hair.*

*This ray has traveled 93 million miles
only to find
your unshaven face.*

[...]
*The sun climbs
over the gleaming city,
over the homeless woman curled on cardboard
guarded by her quiet dog,
over the halal street vendor
frying rice in Faith's Lunchbox,
over dissonant scaffolding,
workers yelling,
over the man
with a jack-hammer
stammering in a cloud of dust.*

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*The sun rises and brings
another day,
a do-over,
a rewind and replay.*

*The sun rises,
and no one wants to be saved.*

In the poem, that is also fittingly the title of the book, 'Nothing important happened today,' Serea offers these simple lines:

The evening smells of cow manure.

*A spider weaves a web on the satellite dish,
making its own small news.*

I could live like this.

The poetic simplicity of these lines seems to contradict the depth and power of the poem. There is no contradiction. Herein lays the artful talent of this poet. The music with which Serea crafts a poem is seamless and unpretentious. The power of her poems is not in a decorative language that forces meaning, but rather in the simple, familiar language that draws the reader toward an understanding that, in the commonplace of a life, the extraordinary exists.