

**Prisms, Particles, and Refractions.**  
**Carol Smallwood.**  
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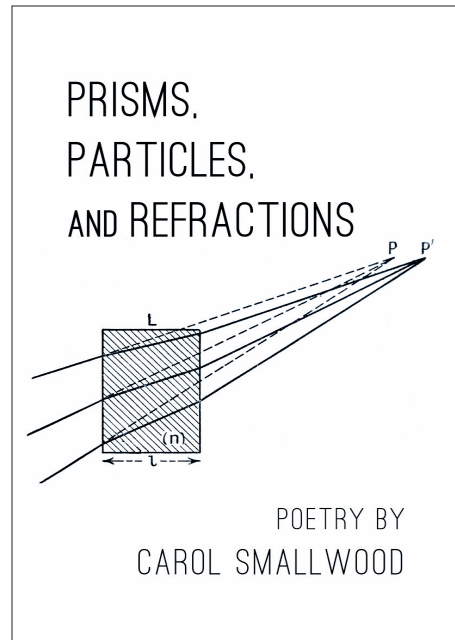
### Blending Beauty with Science

Some might believe that art and science are nothing more than two different academic subjects that are part of school. They might also make the argument that art involves imagination while science involves reasoning. Nevertheless, the world actually needs those two opposing concepts because the world will not be what it is without the both of them. Carol Smallwood has a poetry collection entitled, *Prisms, Particles, and Refractions*. Smallwood effortlessly blends science with art because of her profound examination of those two topics.

Carol Smallwood analyzes light from both a scientific and an artistic perspective to reveal how light contains scientific aesthetics. People with proper vision might be able to see light with their naked eyes, but they might not truly comprehend its beauty. People would not be able to function without light because light symbolically represents knowledge. Smallwood has a very wise introduction because she teaches readers to treasure light for its ability to let people function. Not much might be known about light, but people can still appreciate that blessing. Smallwood also briefly discusses how people take light for granted, and that light is one of the greatest mysteries of the universe.

Smallwood divides her poetry collection to cover three topics about physics. The first section is called, "Prisms," and Smallwood reveals how precious life truly is. Specifically, the poem "Cuttlefish" is about natural beauty. The cuttlefish symbolize the majesty of natural wonder that people are blessed to have. Even though some animals might be dangerous, like snakes, other animals offer companionship. The lines, "survive by matching their / environment" (1-2) reveals the power of adaptability, and that people are capable of dealing with change. There is the classic saying that the only constant in life is change, which means that people need to learn to adapt to their environment filled with variety and diversity. In a way, people are like cuttlefish because all people are fundamentally creatures. Therefore, Carol Smallwood offers interesting perspectives on humanity.

The second section of this poetry collection also reiterates the fact that people are just small beings within the vast universe. There is a very powerful poem entitled "Live With It" that deals with coping. Within



## Wilderness House Literary Review 12/4

this poem, the main subject has vision problems, which might or might not have been caused by light. Smallwood offers a different look at light as a symbol because it can be interpreted as a blessing and a curse. Nevertheless, people have to deal with the fact that good and evil are just fundamental aspects of reality. The poem contains repetition of the line, "When the doctor said cataract surgery wouldn't help, I sighed." Sighing is symbolic of being able to breathe, and that the air people breathe really is a blessing. People might have to encounter tough times, but life can still continue just as long as people are able to take their sacred breaths. Life might be dismal at times, but there is still hope for a brighter future. Because of these fundamental facts, Smallwood once again reminds readers to not take their lives for granted. Life really is a gift after all.

The final section is entitled, "Refractions," and it deals with possible changes of the path that light travels on. In spite of the complexity of this concept within physics, Smallwood still masterfully gives this concept a sense of beauty with her poetry. For example, the poem, "The Sun Acquires" reveals how sunlight really is a blessing. That is because the sun is constantly, "battling clouds to warm shorn fields" (2). Furthermore, sunlight also has the power of "granting light to those who seek it" (3). The notion of people seeking opportunities means that there are those yearning to live meaningful lives. The light once again serves as a symbol of the knowledge that people acquire when they persevere. Ultimately, light is powerful because it allows people have truth and knowledge in spite of the bleakness of reality.

Even though light might represent knowledge, reality is still very subjective. Smallwood addresses that paradoxical truth with the poem, "Icons." The last two lines of this poem are, "The more icons are studied in plain sight / the less (like cats) we understand" (6-7). The shift from an optimistic view on light to a more pessimistic outlook suggests that nothing really is what it seems. In one way, light can bring about knowledge, hope, and creativity. At the same time, though, light and knowledge reveal harsh truths, such as the inevitability of death. People might also make the argument that they truly understand something when they really do not. Additionally, people are also fundamentally creatures by default, much like the cat in this poem. Because of these complex and contrasting ideas, Smallwood suggests that there really is no such thing as absolute truth. Some critics might also go against that notion as well, all of which reveals how reality is very subjective, and that truth is a very mysterious concept.

Carol Smallwood has the talent of making scientific concepts artistic. Her previously published poetry collection entitled *In Hubble's Shadow* also deals with science and the mysteries of the universe Smallwood actually defies conventional poetry because her writing includes a unique combination of traditional poems along with contemporary creations. It can be very challenging to create art, but Smallwood has done it again with *Prisms, Particles, and Refractions*. Readers really should enlighten themselves with the knowledge and wisdom that Carol Smallwood provides in her creative writing. The world really does need artists in order to educate others while providing beauty within the monotony of daily life. Life might be tough at times, but hope allows people to move on in spite of the darkness that is an essential element of reality. Because of the

## **Wilderness House Literary Review 12/4**

universal fact that there are both positives and negatives within all aspects of reality, it is a blessing to know that poetry can enlighten the mind and soothe the soul. Thank you, Carol Smallwood, for writing about fundamental truths within human existence!