

## Wilderness House Literary Review 19/2

**The Trapeze of your Flesh**  
**Charles Rammelkamp**  
**Blaze VOX Books,**  
**ISBN: 978-1-60964-465-9, 174pp \$20**  
*Review By G Emil Reutter*

Rammelkamp brings us on a journey into the history of burlesque and stripping from Boston to the west coast and Europe. It is a romp from the late 1800's up until the 00's. As much as the poems are energetic, frenzied one may say, there are many written with a sublime sadness. Through the tassels, g-strings, feathers and sex, these are performers whose lives are documented by Rammelkamp.

Abuse in many forms rears its ugly head in many of the poems concerning minors dancing in shows,

domestic violence, homicide, yet through it all there is no doubt Rammelkamp conducted extensive research in this collection that throughout maintains the energy of a carnival.

There are the characters, many who became household names even appearing in various television and movie productions and yet other arrested for indecent exposure. The adult entertainment industry no matter the name is a dangerous life and surely not easy. There is the mix of politicians throughout the collection: a mayor of Boston, governor of Louisiana and of course all of the entertainers claimed to have slept with JFK and Sinatra. There is even a sighting of Dick Nixon at one of the clubs. Ironic that the assassin of JFK was murdered by a burlesque club owner.

This collection of poems is not only a documentation of many of these forgotten performers but also of the venues across two continents, many in red light districts that have been demolished. Today's gentlemen's clubs, an oxymoron, pale when compared to the origin of the art of the tease. Who would have thought after three centuries of scandal, of abuse, of rip-roaring entertainment that once again two adult entertainers are at the center of a political payoff to influence an election?

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