

MH CLAY ABOUT PEYCHO KANEV'S *r*

Poetry by Peycho Kanev
Poetry by Felino Soriano
Graphics by Edward Wells II &
Duane Locke
Editing and Layout by Edward Wells II

This title immediately draws me in, sparks the question, "r" what?

The first poem takes my spark with an imperative, "find me one small torch". By these words I am immediately engaged and happy to embark upon this ride, this adventure.

I take in view after view, second glance is mindful hunger, this writer can quench thirst. Third, he raises the dead; fourth he reveals Monet and pours out pain. I am liking this poet. By now it is clear, he is a poet and I an enraptured reader. He takes black pearls from the Angels and rolls them right out on the pages of this book. He says so, then six more views followed by a graphic; two.

In one, the poet toasts me; he takes his drink, I take mine. The other, a frozen leaf, recalls images already read. Wow! I am really liking this book.

Then, the eighth poem turns me on my ear. It is ekphrastic. I know, what the hell? "Ekphrasis: a literary description of or commentary on a visual work of art" says Webster. The piece had a title and a reference to the painting which inspired it. The language is crisp, the images illusive, the references esoteric. I am challenged. I think I like it, but what?

Two, three more and I am spinning. This word wrangled vocab challenge is too clever for me. This poet is schizoid. How can he do this? Start tugging right at my viscera, then abruptly freeze them for detached examination?

Now I think I should look at this whole book. Who is the poet? No names in the early pages, no table of contents or preface or forward. No publisher's page. Hmmmmmm. So, I turn to the back and there it is, a table of contents. I'll be damned. No wonder my consternation. This book contains work by two poets. (Editor's Note: My initial read of this book was from a PDF copy, emailed to us by Mr. Kanev. The cover page has an image of Mr. Kanev on the left of the letter "r", small case, with a photo of a grate [in a wall, on a ceiling?] to the right, centered on a white background, but no names. I later ordered the book [from Amazon - check it out]. The hard copy has a wonderful, gloss finish with the addition of four names, one to each corner of the page. So, I would have known there were four individuals involved with this book, had I read the hard copy first. However, I still have no insight to the mystery of the book's title. Why "r"?)

One is the poet Peycho Kanev. This is the guy who grabbed me by the gonads on the first page. Made me see emotion as raw organs. He showed me for the old dead dog that I am and got me barking for more.

The other author is Felino Soriano. This is the word master, ekphrastic wizard. He is challenging and bracing. He is certainly worthy of future consideration.

Both of these poets are edited by Edward Wells II, who is also responsible for the layout. This publishing editor (editing publisher?) chose these two poets and threw them together in this one book, without warning. The layout is clever, I guess. I am distracted by some placements of poem titles at the bottom of one page followed by the bodies of the poems at the top of the next, not always facing, page. Well, I get caught on words, not layout. And caught I was, through the first twelve pages I was enthralled and in awe.

Then Soriano, then shifting formats. My questions about the book title "r" never are answered. I'm thinking it's an inside joke. The book is a visual work of art, maybe. If I look at it as form and color, I can see it as such. Maybe that is Mr. Wells' intent. He is too clever for me. I am sorry for Mr. Soriano. He deserves to be read on his own. He is mis-matched with Mr. Kanev. Mr. Kanev is mis-matched with him. Not fair to either poet, I'm thinking.

But, I want to talk about Mr. Kanev. Psycho Kanev. And this is the problem. I have to use poor words to describe rich ones. So, I resort to the highest form of flattery. I plagiarize. I use Kanev's words to describe Kanev's words. I read Kanev and am exposed as the old dog that I am. He is the one who can paint pictures.

I read more and gain a sense of foreboding. He makes us chuckle with some clever phrases, but soon I see he is a commentator; showing us something. He says that poetry is nothing to fuck with. By this he is getting down to it, taking us with him. A Kanev read is no day trip, no stop on the literary tour. Reading Kanev is a challenge. He is challenging us to see the whole of life. His words are sweet and harsh. His mood is despondent but detached. He must hold his words at arms length lest they strangle him.

This is not a feast to be gobbled, but a communion to be savored with quiet introspection. Kanev's communion is for the faithful only. It is the body and blood of his whole life poured out on these pages. No half life, no whispered life is legitimized. Don't venture lightly into his words. They are a test.

Kanev rails at those who keep the poetry dead while he laughs at himself for screaming in his mirror for recognition. Then he divulges his purpose with the only words in the only sequence that makes any soul sense at all, while stating all the sense of his soul: "I will stick my hand in my chest and take out my alive and throbbing heart then I will plunge it into you."

I suggest you read this poet. I suggest you be seated when you do. Better yet, you should kneel. Kanev is a spritual read.

MH Clay
Mad Swirl Poetry Editor