

“This Is Not Eden”

Written by Tracy Hamon

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Review by Shelley A. Leedah

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In the title of her debut collection, “This Is Not Eden,” Regina poet Tracy Hamon hints at the poetic world she has forged. Eden, no, but Hamon does offer readers a lyrical and realistic take on the complexities of what it means to be a woman in the 21st Century, and if not paradise, *passion* is never far away.

Hamon was recently recognized by winning the City of Regina Writing Award, a commendation usually bestowed upon writers with substantial book publications and an achievement that speaks of her burgeoning talent.

Hamon writes eloquently of the night, but there is much more than the moon haunting her sky. Crows are a central image in this collection. We hear them in “Awakening” – “The crow caws raspy breath in my ear/moon thrust aside” and in “Bearfly” -- “Crow laughs/trickster that he is.” “A black feather captivates your thoughts” in “The Timing of Things” and “Last year/crows had too much/to say, scavenged words/you struggled to hold/in sharp letter cages,” Hamon writes in “Evolution of a Poet.” There’s a poem called “Dead Crow” and in “Lament for the Leaving,” “crow carries reason/on pleated wings, speaks a voice/you do not understand.”

Of all that is to be admired in this collection – and there is much – my favourite passage appears in the humorously-titled “Throwing Hammers On A Public Street” – “When your name relaxed against mine/I leaned into the sound, a horse/bending into the wind/whenever you were spoken.” A favourite image is from the poem “Without Words,” – “You listen/from the rear of the chapel, see/only backs of heads and shoulders/bodies trimmed by pews.”

“This Is Not Eden,” is a passionate first book from a writer who has earned her wings.

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