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Trans (Wesleyan Poetry Series)



Synopsis

This elegant and moving collection grew out of Hilda Raz's experience with her son's journey to a transgender identity. Born Sarah, now Aaron, Raz's child has had a profound impact on her understanding of what it means to be a family, to be whole, and to know oneself. The collection moves between past and present, allowing Raz to reflect on her own childhood, and on her experience with breast cancer to find ways to connect with Aaron. The journey takes us from intimacy to strangeness and back again, from denial to humor to grief and rage, but always laced with love and acceptance. "Trans" means across, through, over, to or on the other side, and beyond. The book documents some major transformations of body, self, society and spirit that art requires and life allows. The poems themselves are accessible and finely wrought. They are equally testaments to Raz's insistence on making an order out of chaos, of finding ways to create and understand and eventually accept new definitions of self and family. The physical and sensuous language of Raz's poems, and their humanity, keep them intimately bound to the world and to the senses.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (3 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

This beautifully crafted series of poems explores the meanings of 'trans', from the author's experiences with breast cancer to her adult child's female-to-male transition. Loss, movement, and processes of forging new understanding are important themes. The volume is organized into

sections, each of which begins with a dictionary definition of the prefix 'trans-'. Raz is one of the United States' most important contemporary poets and editors of poetry, so it is no surprise that she handles these issues with such dexterity in this book.

This book claims to have an interesting premise, and I quote from the back, "This elegant and moving collection grew out of Hilda Raz's experience with her son's journey to a transgender identity." And while she does touch on it in several poems, she leaves so much of this unmined. I didn't find any of the poems in the book to be particularly outstanding, and as a whole the collection was rather weak, though it did have some highlights. It starts with a great poem by Rilke. Tough to live up to, and she does not. You get a couple of good lines and stanzas here and there, but there are so many really good collections of poetry out there, that you can safely avoid this one.

This is the real stuff here. Amazing content, rendered in powerful, crafted, beautiful language. From structure to line to word, this is a stunning, remarkable collection. My hat is off.

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