



Money Shot

Rae Armantrout

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The poems in *Money Shot* are forensic. Just as the money shot in porn is proof of the male orgasm, these poems explore questions of revelation and concealment. What is seen, what is hidden, and how do we know? *Money Shot*'s investigation of these questions takes on a particular urgency because it occurs in the context of the suddenly revealed market manipulation and subsequent "great recession" of 2008-2009. In these poems, Rae Armantrout searches for new ways to organize information. What can be made manifest? What constitutes proof? Do we "know it when we see it"? Looking at sex, botany, cosmology, and death through the dark lens of "disaster capitalism," Armantrout finds evidence of betrayal, grounds for rebellion, moments of possibility, and even pleasure, in a time of sudden scarcity and relentless greed. This stunning follow-up to *Versed*--winner of the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award, and a finalist for the National Book Award--is a wonderfully stringent exploration of how deeply our experience of everyday life is embedded in capitalism.

Money Shot Details

Date : Published February 8th 2011 by Wesleyan

ISBN : 9780819571304

Author : Rae Armantrout

Format : Hardcover 77 pages

Genre : Poetry

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From Reader Review Money Shot for online ebook

Steven Critelli says

Unquestionably, Armantrout makes extraordinary demands on her reader. Words have an atomic weight, being freighted with symbolism, allegory and metaphor, and her usage deliberately questions the value of traditional connotations upon which many poetry readers rely. Likewise, Armantrout forces the reader to apprehend form and content in its various guises. Because she experiments with her poetry, the resulting resonance, irony, and revelation come as an after-effect, upon re-reading and thinking through her material. So a reader must trust the poet that the added effort will be worth the often grueling work getting there. She is not easily approached when you are accustomed to the music of Eliot, Stevens, Creeley and other lyrical poets. Often Armantrout's prosody is as dry as the desert heat at the bottom of Death Valley. The lyrical features become evident only when you have spent a long time pruning the thorns among the cactus flowers. Yet, a poem like "Errands," with its fairytale lightness covering the macabre and sexual underbelly, delivers that unique sense of gratification that few poems can rival.

See my review here: <http://rockcru.wordpress.com/2013/01/...>

Lisa Mooney says

Always like to read poetry, but these pieces just didn't speak to me from the page. This could be just not having read Armantrout before and not being used to her voice/style. I was often confused by the titles and found that if i just read the pieces without that opener they had more meaning for me. I may try to find audio of these (and other Armantrout poems) as that can often infuse the poet's meaning better. But even with those challenges, I am glad I picked it up.

Liam says

I will reread this, it just didn't speak to me on the first reading.

Lucas says

"Soft Money" is amazing. The rest has some bright spots, but is occasionally opaque.

Emily Dobbs says

I'd like to read "Versed" but this book was great. I got it from the Library and was reminded why I don't generally check poetry out from the library: I can't write my notes in the margins. Overall I really liked it but I need to get my hands on my own copy to fully absorb the work.

Justin Evans says

Money Shot's main virtue is its clarity. Armantrout has something to do with the LANGUAGE poets, but at least in this book there's no sign of that movements sillier theoretical tendencies. Consider the last few stanzas of 'Prayers':

The blue triangles
on the rug
repeating.

Coming up,
a discussion
on the uses
of torture.

The fear
that all *this*
will end.

The fear
that it won't.

I experienced most of the book in the light of this poem: an elegy for liberals who can't quite believe what "their" country has become. This is the kind of emotion that makes no sense to me; I'm not American, I've never believed that America was anything other than what it manifestly is, and the feeling of loss that American liberals feel post 9/11 strikes me as, at worst, naive, and, at best, odd.

This is the first of Armantrout's books that I've read, and I'm impressed at how well she expresses this cultural moment. I do wish the poems showed a bit more distance from the moment, though.

The cover blurb (not the poet's fault, I'm sure) suggests that "Armantrout searches for new ways to organize information. What can be made manifest? What constitutes proof? Looking at sex, botany, cosmology and death through the dark lens of 'disaster capitalism,' Armantrout finds evidence of betrayal, grounds for rebellion, moments of possibility, and even pleasure, in a time of sudden scarcity and relentless greed."

You read right: *sudden* scarcity. For whom? Anyway, the good news is that that's obviously a sales pitch to university professors. This is just good bedtime reading, sometimes pretty, sometimes thoughtful, sometimes just a teeny bit complicated. It has nothing, in other words, to do with the "dark lens" of disaster capitalism.

Al Filreis says

A marvelous book of poems that will reward slow close reading (as is always the case with Armantrout). Think about money. Look at your retirement savings (if any). Are you too big to fail? Then read these

poems. Seriously.

Ben G says

- Embarrassed I hadn't read Armantrout before. "Money Shot" is the first book of short-lined poems I've read this century that didn't feel tied to the early '90s. Most of my thesis was in that 60s-80s style. (I was pretty into James Tate.)

- Thematically I thought of Atom Egoyan due to a shared fascination with the distillation of sign and content into voyeuristic image.

- Many reviews mark "MS" as cold, but the scientific mindset behind Armantrout's exploration of various obsessions worked for me - whether acquisition, sex or experiences.

Kimberly says

i cannot lie, i picked this up for its title

Michael says

*They're sexy
because they're needy,
which degrades them.*

*They're sexy because
they don't need you.*

*They're sexy because they pretend
not to need you,*

*but they're lying,
which degrades them.*

*They're beneath you
and it's hot.*

*They're across the border,
rhymes with dancer —*

*they don't need
to understand.*

*They're content to be
(not mean),*

*which degrades them
and is sweet.*

*They want to be
the thing-in-itself*

and the thing-for you —

Miss Thing —

but can't.

*They want to be you,
but can't,*

which is so hot.

Arick says

Sparse, delightful, a vicious feeding left to images of the greater mind. I enjoyed the simplicity of Armantrout's style, a refreshing panoply of minimalism in an age of sheer verbosity. The poems are short and effective, the images within never over-wrought. There is great depth here. Read the poem "Sway" and you'll be hooked to Armantrout's juxtaposition of frigid, distant images with the turgid sublimity of emotional intimacy. Post-confessional poetry, you could call it.

John Pappas says

Armantrout's latest collection reminds me of the Winchester Mystery House in California -- there are many hidden passageways and trap doors that go nowhere and many tricks of perspective that disorient and discombobulate as the reader pursues lead after lead down corridors that collapse around him as he progresses. More allusive than her previous collections, to both pop culture (economics, TV, war news) and poetry (Hopkins, Milton), and sometimes more elliptical, Armantrout constructs more layered texts, without losing the sometimes crystalline brilliance and insight that are so nakedly evident in poems like "Sway", my favorite in the collection. I have been waiting for this collection since I read *Versed* and am not disappointed. Armantrout is one of the most strange-making, playful and inimitable poets working today.

Lou Last says

Warble

1

Wordsworth's secret
fresnet.

First orgasm.

Hopkins' holy
ghost.

Wordsworth's sudden
multitude

remain standing.

What burbles?
What warbles?

Sea to shining, shining

2

The angels are the old gods
with a new service
orientation.

They've put aside
their hijinks
for the greater good,

for unimpeded
transmission.

"Fear not,"
the wires sing.

*

The Hang

It's important to articulate
the original,

hurtful,
blurred composite.

Frames should be viewed
sequentially,

in time —
gaps

in the clouds.

Blue shapes

on their way

somewhere?

The slow parade.

It's possible

to get the hang.

*

Siel Ju says

The book's somewhat less about -- though not not about -- the great recession than the jacket quotes make it out to be. Poems are often structured as short sections, each an observation of sorts -- the sections then obliquely connected via the title. Not all such oblique connections work, IMHO. Favorite poem is "With":

"I write things down
to show others
later
or to show myself
that I am not alone with
my experience."

Antonio Delgado says

Rae's poems show that we have not just become algorithms but we are part of the trap of our own language. We are the extension of our created world.
