



Streets in Their Own Ink: Poems

Stuart Dybek

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"Streets in Their Own Ink . . . has a gritty realism infused with a sense of the marvelous." --Edward Hirsch, *The Washington Post*

**In a city like that one might sail
through life led by a runaway hat.
The young scattered in whatever directions
their wild hair pointed and, gusting
into one another, they fell in love.
-from "Windy City"**

In his second book of poems, Stuart Dybek finds vitality in the same vibrant imagery that animates his celebrated works of fiction. The poems of *Streets in Their Own Ink* map the internal geographies of characters who inhabit severe and often savage city streets, finding there a tension that transfigures past and present, memory and fantasy, sin and sanctity, nostalgia and the need to forget. Full of music and ecstasy, they consecrate a shadowed, alternate city of dreams and retrospection that parallels a modern city of hard realities. Ever present is Dybek's signature talent for translating "extreme and fantastic events into a fabulous dailiness, as though the extraordinary were everywhere around us if only someone would tell us where to look" (Geoffrey Wolff).

Streets in Their Own Ink: Poems Details

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Author : Stuart Dybek

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Joseph says

This reading of Dybek's poetry comes as a bit of late research on my part.

The first section of this collection hit home for me. It seems that we both grew up in a primarily Polish Catholic neighborhood. Many things that Dybek writes about, I experienced from the red brick streets to the biker bar (where I used to deliver the newspaper). It was an immigrant part of town and many of the grandparents did not speak English or very limited English.

The poems captured a bit of lost youth. "Ginny's Basement" is much like many friends' basements, an indoor teenage hideaway cave where parents seemed to respect your space. "Fish Camp" and the catching of bullheads took me back to the pond where I used to fish after school. My grandmother (first generation American) paid me for the fish I caught. No one else in my family would eat bullheads. "Volcano" reminded me of the steel mill. The hot steel flowing and the coke tower fires visible for miles. Like a volcano it also left its "ash" for miles around.

I am sure we were from different cities and different times (a generation apart) but there are ties and shared memories we both experienced that we both carry on through adulthood. Dybek gives the reader a big city flashback to what many like to think of as better days of youth.

BurntOrangeOwl says

Makes you want to write, to notice better. The poems are about abstract notions: love, memory, childhood, ethnicity, family, religion, but via tangible scenes, objects: bouncing pearl beads, basement disrobings, hubcap mirrors, novena incense. Wonderful. Now for one of the novels...

Tasha says

The poems in Streets In Their Own Ink seem like clear relatives of The Coast of Chicago. Dybek roots us in the concrete (the city) and then takes us another layer deeper, dissecting and reassembling it all. Dybek tends toward the lyrical, narrative-driven poem (and occasionally this can feel a little too explanatory). At any rate, I found myself taking notes and recording all my favorite moments in this book (and there were many). It's a gorgeous collection and I plan to buy my own copy.

Dan Kugler says

that's some real fine poems... chicago style you know?

Dana Jerman says

Incredible. This is the best book of poetry I've read in a long time. Dybek never disappoints. Earnest and marvelous.

Nan says

Some of these poems do feel like short story rehearsals, but I guess I don't care. I love Dybek. He paints pictures better than Edward Hopper. His language is gorgeous and surreal. His characters are both left behind and transported to a more hopeful future. They sail through life "led by a runaway hat". They are like "scarves streaming...vapor trails".

RUSA CODES says

This was one of the 2006 RUSA Notable Books winners. For the complete list, go to <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rus...>

Megan says

someone sweet and smart gave me this book, inscribed with a little poetic message just for me (shucks), so my thoughts on it are closely tied in with that memory rather than the poems themselves. But I like it.

Jennifer Murphy says

Love the language in this one. Raw and gritty with unexpected imagery. Very nice!

Libby says

I could live in his poems.

Kelly says

Dark, stark, gorgeous. When I finished I found myself wishing there was more of him to read. And then I find out he has not one but TWO books coming out in 2014...!!

Kristy says

Favorites:

- "Windy City"
 - "Angelus"
 - "Current"
-

Meg Gee says

I think this is one of those collections that benefit from more than one reading. I enjoyed it, but it didn't blow me away. However, it's still a worthwhile read for his ability to transform towns into insidious microcosms.

Simon Sweetman says

Some real grittiness in these poems, wonderful street tales, but the technique and skill here is impeccable.

Dave Newman says

No offense to Stuart Dybek, whose books I've often enjoyed, but these are the worst poems I've read in years. As evidence, I submit these lines from "Christening":

A synchronized wingbeat and the flock
gusted into a syllable and vanished,
a cry less to do with language
than the vocalization of snow,
its meaning a music hidden from words...

If this is the language a poet praised for writing about the streets uses, no wonder the world doesn't make sense and politicians lie to us nonstop.

On the donkey dick scale, this book gets 14 inches. No thanks.
