

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thin Snow

poems 2006–2008
by Omar Shapli



In *Thin Snow*, with ice slivers melting onto the web of his grip on a rocks glass, Omar Shapli holds forth, still wearing flood gaiters from wading in the backwash of history, his personal stake grizzled in the sonority of his voice. This is straight-from-the-barroom poetry, a man’s game

too rarely played these days, where “in adrianopolitan postulation” the dart-wielding bard isn’t afraid to snow you with his swagger, so long as you understand that’s not cover-up but conviviality, an extension of good cheer overlying the vigor of his sense—“(free and unmortified).” From “permanent war” to “persistent instant,” actor-turned-poet Shapli urges towards—unending search—the interpretive liquefaction of “performance authenticity” in art and deed, by way of Cape Cod and Cote du Rhone reds, “cloudshroud” and casubelli. You’ll buy the next round to keep him going: “give it the oldtime whoosh / give it the hardened grin” Yet, what rings in your ears after last call as you stumble the sidewalks home—stanzas like “Each says his skiff alone / will haul the iceberg further off. / Brave words!”—once sunk in, will sober you up right quick.
M. Magnus

Frozen Brook

A grand uneven stairway, lacking all provenance, leading uphill farther than human memory toward some temple long vanished beneath the evergreens. Overlapped slabs, tilted, deeply grooved: hasn’t the wind of centuries performed the requisite snappings and gougings? That, and generations of sandaled feet? Echoed splashing from distant cisterns evoke wonder at the longgone architects. They were brutal, demanding more than function could ever metabolize: why an effort so massive to craft an uneasy caprice? Requiescat!

Eons collapse when the cellphone peals:
grab a branch to steady the heels.

Omar Shapli’s latest collection takes us through the gates of history and myth to landscapes of meditation. He combines urbanity and a cosmopolitan spirit with a rich language that pulses with a mixture of the commonplace and the obscure. He takes us on journeys where metaphors are carried by the tides of the imagination.

Don Burness

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