



Torn from the Sun

Poetry by Gregory Donovan
ISBN 978-1-59709-326-2
Binding: Tradepaper
Size: 6 x 9; Pages: 112
Price: US \$18.95
Pub Date: April 14, 2015



Gregory Donovan



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"*Torn from the Sun* is psychologically intricate, resolutely thrilling, and an immaculately crafted volume of poems."

—David St. John

Both daring and exacting, *Torn from the Sun*, journeys through the ensnarements of mortality. The poems' meditations, rendered in supple language and form, invite us to step along with the likes of Miyamoto Musashi, John Coltrane, Walter Benjamin, Jorge Luis Borges, and Vincent Van Gogh, as they fly and fall through labyrinthine paths of life. *Torn from the Sun* weaves mosaic steps that stir the ashes of rebirth, recognizing that these bewildering, narrow corridors are not a prison for death, but rather a space for interior discovery. Traced in this poetry is *a way out* and it is the way in.

Praise for *Torn from the Sun*

"Donovan's new book collects a wisdom poetry with all the peril that this implies—not the glamorous jeweled armpit of some Greek oracle who can place large crystals of salt in your brain, but that and the wonder of fragrant basil in the goat manure outside the entrance to her cave. These are our first ideas, our oldest ideas made memorable again. A brilliant book."

—Norman Dubie

"Lush in sound and image, the poems in *Torn from the Sun* look through the lenses of natural, personal, and collective history to ask how we endure in loss and in beauty. I loved this opening couplet from 'Ravens at Tamalpais': 'Bald white trunk & dead black bark, *toc-toc*. Small shrugs / in long black coats, their stripped pine whipping at the skyline . . .' Donovan offers us a deep and immersive read, full of loving detail and thought."

—Dana Levin

Biographical Note

Gregory Donovan is the author of *Calling His Children Home* (University of Missouri Press, 1993), which won the Devins Award for Poetry. His poetry, essays, and fiction have appeared in *The Kenyon Review*, *The Southern Review*, *New England Review*, *42opus*, *diode*, *Crazyhorse*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *Gulf Coast*, *Copper Nickel*, and many other journals, as well as in a number of anthologies, including *Common Wealth: Contemporary Poets of Virginia* (University of Virginia Press, 2003). Among other awards for his writing, he is the recipient of the Robert Penn Warren Award from New England Writers, as well as grants from the Virginia Commission for the Arts and fellowships from the Ucross Foundation and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts.



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More Praise for *Torn from the Sun*

“In Gregory Donovan’s *Torn from the Sun*, the extraordinary voices that populate this collection are both historically resonant and meditatively complex. In the tradition of storytellers who, after wandering the globe, return home with phantasmagoric tales of hope, evil, and redemption, Gregory Donovan allows his speakers to reflect upon their times and passage through the many labyrinths that confront them. *Torn from the Sun* is psychologically intricate, resolutely thrilling, and an immaculately crafted volume of poems.”

—David St. John

From *Torn from the Sun*

Besides

Those palominos, sweet doves, gallop here and never
draw any closer. My head hit the rock wall of the well—
Mister Little To Nothing knocked me in, if you need to know,
my *father*—and that was it. For a while I was thinking I was
thinking, then I wasn’t. Like rats in the big barn.
Mouth foam, little beaches. Their vacation paradise.
The grain elevator man told me once rats can laugh.

So I died and it wasn’t much different from anything
else, maybe it was too much like Nothing’s shaky hand
scratching a line through each number on the funeral
home calendar, sending our days into the shit
hole of never never. And where was *what should have been?*
Labor from sunup, no breakfast till noon, beatings
the rest of the day—the neighbors’ wild-eyed horses got
treated better, though they got their share of pain.

The last thing in my head, besides *I guess*
it all had to come to this, old daddy of mine
after the hammer landed and I was flying,
besides the blue shining all around my shadow
as I spilled into the cold and dark, shimmering
like a rainbow-coated starling swooping into the waiting
wheel of light, besides that last glimpsed ripple
of cream-gold waves ruffling the wheat field’s hair
then the feel of it, wind on my face I carried with me
into the next world and the next: *Big nothing*
comes from little to nothing you know, and
besides, I’m glad I poisoned the water.