

Cruising at Sixty to Seventy
Poems and Essay by Jim Tilley
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Binding: Tradepaper
Size: 6 x 9; Pages: 120
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Pub Date: April 15, 2014



Jim Tilley



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Poems and Essay

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The second collection from award-winning poet Jim Tilley, who writes “finely crafted poems in which readers will find bits and pieces of their own lives” (Stephen Dobyns).

Cruising at Sixty to Seventy is the second book from award-winning poet Jim Tilley. In three sections—Dear Wife, Dear Self, Dear Friends—the speaker, a physicist and mathematician by education, now retired from a career on Wall Street, reflects on everyday experience, finding grace and drama in life’s smaller moments. As in Tilley’s debut collection, *In Confidence*, many poems use ideas, problems, and puzzles from physics and mathematics to explore personal relationships, such as “Particle and Wave,” in which a fundamental concept from quantum mechanics becomes a metaphor for the ripples and collisions on the fabric of family life. The book ends with a personal essay, “The Elegant Solution” (originally published as a *Ploughshares* Solo), about Tilley’s relationship with his father based on the language of mathematics.

Praise for Jim Tilley's First Book, *In Confidence*

“Jim Tilley does confide in his readers here as he explores a refreshing variety of subjects—everything from the complexity of father-son and husband-wife relations to the more solvable problems of dark matter and the origins of the cosmos. But what wins our confidence is not his range but his steady hand on the poem and his steady gaze at the world.”

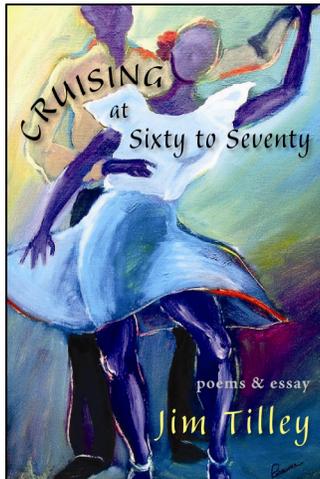
—Billy Collins

“Jim Tilley is a bracing and quietly confident writer, able to consistently surprise us, whether in missives from domestic life, topical poems, or poems which quirkily address what he calls “the big questions.” These are wry, bittersweet, and unobtrusively instructive poems in the tradition of Wilbur, Schuyler, and Dunn, and they are very much worth reading.”

—David Wojahn

Biographical Note

Jim Tilley is the award-winning author of *In Confidence* (Red Hen Press, 2011). He earned a doctorate in physics from Harvard and worked on Wall Street for twenty years. He lives in Bedford Corners, New York.



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From *Cruising at Sixty to Seventy*

The Log

Nothing to do but slump against the log, let his heart slow, try to talk himself down, make it back. He'd had to straddle it, let his front leg dangle, pull his back leg over. As he jumped to the ground, he wasn't aware of anything but a stab in his calf. A rattlesnake slithered off. He sat, oddly calm, his mind molting as the sun began to poke through the sassafras and dapple the forest floor, cicadas winding themselves up in the morning heat, the growing concert making it harder to concentrate. Live in the moment, his wife had said, and in a way this was a good moment, everything around him at peace, even the snake. But he had to write it all down while he still had some mind to. He removed a crumpled sheet of paper from his left pocket, rummaged around his right and found he'd forgotten a pen.

Particle and Wave

*particles have no meaning as isolated entities,
but can only be understood as interconnections...*

—Erwin Schrodinger

You and I were doing what we do best—
throwing stones—
this time from the side
of a country bridge into the reservoir,
each arcing under the forces
of physics until impact, the consequence
spreading in ripples, the stone
become invisible in the bottom muck,
its presence propagating
across the surface,
as our presence does
to the fabric of something less grand
than space-time. Then yours and mine
cast together, landing in different spots,
their wavelets colliding,
passing through each other,
cohering in some places, canceling in others,
the pattern richer for the two
than one... then in our excitement,
each of us tossing a handful at once,
the pattern becoming richer still,
not still at all, moving out into the world—
children, siblings, parents, friends,
adding up to something grand.