



News from

Red Hen Press

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The Hundred Fathom Curve

Poems by

John Barr

The Hundred Fathom Curve chronicles the search for an American identity from the Vietnam War to 9/11. The poems, drawn from five previous collections and published over 40 years, include Barr's eye witness accounts as a Navy veteran of Vietnam, and as a New Yorker who was present at 9/11. They explore the boundary of what is human with all that is not, and find things never to be as they seem. They follow the journey from nature into art, and the efforts of the artist to discover what it means to be human.

The Hundred Fathom Curve

Poems by John Barr

ISBN: 978-1-59709-497-9

6 x 9; Trade paper

120 pages

Price: US \$19.95

Released

Biographical note:

The poems of **John Barr** have appeared in many magazines, and have been published in six collections: *The War Zone* (1989), *Natural Wonders* (1991), *The Dial Painters* (1994), *Centennial Suite* (1998) (all by Warwick Press) and *The Hundred Fathom Curve* (1997), and *Grace* (1999), by Story Line Press. Barr is President Emeritus of the Poetry Society of America, has taught in the Graduate Writing Program of Sarah Lawrence College, and was appointed in 2004 the first president of The Poetry Foundation, publisher of *Poetry* magazine.

Praise for *The Hundred Fathom Curve*:

"John Barr is a poet of elegant saying rather than singing, and his subjects are the familiar guiding stars of our common life: love, its presence or absence; war; the physical world and, especially... the investigative empathy toward others that keeps us civilized.... These are poems to read more than once; John Barr is excellent company at every visit."

—Mary Oliver, Pulitzer Prize winner

"I take my poetry seriously – which means I don't have a lot of patience with things that are *not* poems. These are *real* poems, with a fine sense of how the words and rhythms can work to produce the kind of pressure, and vivid sense of experience, that they communicate...some of what Henry James called 'the real thing.'"

—Neil L. Rudenstine, President, Harvard University



More Praise for *The Hundred Fathom Curve*



"Nothing has a right to the space it occupies" says John Barr in one of his poems, and this tough-minded remark is typical of the skeptical eye his work casts upon the thousand-thinged world. Barr's speaker is wary of what is 'arty and not true' and is often in despair to see 'what one must do to excel.' Nonetheless these poems are full of admiration for creation, and the created--geological schist and Hudson River divers, spiderwebs and hydroelectric dams. *The Hundred Fathom Curve* is a panoramic suite, meditating on means and ends, interrelationships; nature and history. Lucid, discursive, taut in phrasemaking, lit by memorable images, these poems are lively, probing and finally convey the pleasures of an especially thoughtful and wide-ranging amazement."

—Tony Hoagland

from "Articles of War"

The plane in pieces raining down
thy kingdom come
the flyers, nothing more to fly in, fall.

Then our ship turning in the fog
searching the small black waves around.

Out of the weather in the hangar bay
I stoop to the debris.
The ruined gear gives back
a warmed, rank smell of sea.

Wing flap with flak holes
Orange, buoyant seat pads
Crushed helmet with fittings torn away

Lacking its head, the helmet
is him here, the man I didn't meet,
whom I may not have liked,
who may have said *Jesus* in surprise
when the world bucked and let him through.





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