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They Lift Their Wings to Cry

Brooks Haxton

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They Lift Their Wings to Cry Brooks Haxton
Brooks Haxton's poetry has celebrated for thirty years our troubled pleasures in the daily world. This new collection, titled after a meditation on the cry of the snowy tree cricket, gives us his most moving response to the ferocious beauty of nature and to the folly and magnificence of human undertakings.

In the opening poem, the poet comes home drunk without his key, collapses in the yard, and looks up to where, he says:
Whorls of a magnetic field
exfoliated under the solar wind,
so that the northern lights above me
trembled. No: that was the porch light
blurred by tears.

With this self-deprecating wit and tenderness toward human failings, these poems search through history into the wilderness of our origins, and through the self into the mysterious presences of people we love.

A master of moods—as when a poem of grief after the death of a friend becomes a sprightly litany of her favorite wildflowers—Haxton is a poet who summons essences of thought and feeling in a few words, creating both narratives and miniatures that are rich in possibility beyond the page.

ISAAC'S ROOM, EMPTY, 4 A.M.

From the dark tree at his window
blossoms battered by the rain
fell into the summer grass, white
horns, all spattered down the throat
with purple ink, while unseen birds,
with creaks and peeps
and whistles, started
the machinery of daybreak.

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