

**POETRY**

ISBN-13: 978-1-927068-87-8

ISBN-10: 1-927068-87-8

\$17.95 CDN / \$16.95 USD

5.5" x 8.5" / 93 pages / trade paper

PUB DATE: March 30, 2014

Swimming With Turtles

Spirit of Place

Doug Beardsley

Travelling through various Pacific Ocean nations, Beardsley's contemplative poems inspire us to reflect on the remarkable cultures and lives in these exotic environments and how they connect with our own. Simulating the rhythms and patterns of oral speech, *Swimming with Turtles: Spirit of Place* reads with a colloquial and experiential cadence, expressing travel experiences as spoken narratives. The direct and spontaneous language of the poems makes us forget the kind of aesthetic exercises and experiments that we often associate with poetry, and define Beardsley's work as more of an integral dialogue that he is sharing with the reader. This relaxed contemporary style leaves no doubt that he is celebrating ordinary people in often extraordinary moments.

"Once again, Doug Beardsley is 'going down into history.' In the tradition of Stevenson and Melville, he sails the waters of the South Pacific and the Caribbean in search of 'spirit of place.' Beardsley looks beyond the invasion of "mahogany tourists" and finds he cannot help "thinking of slavery" and "sea dragons." He meditates on those who have come before; from Cortez and Cook to Gauguin and Neruda. In *Swimming with Turtles: Spirit of Place* history and myth fuse with the present in fine poems like "Dark Hummingbird's Dance" and the final "Sacrificial Presence."

– David Day



Doug Beardsley has produced both poetry and prose that is visionary and historically rich. His celebrated friendships with Canadian legends Irving Layton and Al Purdy have further informed his writing and created a legacy of fourteen books dating back to the mid-1970s. He has published over 200 poems in a wide variety of periodicals, given over 125 poetry readings, and written over 250 book reviews.

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He has been nominated for the BC Poetry Prize and the George Woodcock Prize. Beardsley lives in Victoria, BC.



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