Mrs. Ramsay's Knee

Anderson, Idris

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THE MAY SWENSON
POETRY AWARD

This annual competition, named for May Swenson, honors her as one of America’s most provocative and vital poets. In the words of John Hollander, she was “one of our few unquestionably major poets.” During her long career, May was loved and praised by writers from virtually every major school of poetry. She left a legacy of nearly fifty years of writing when she died in 1989.

May Swenson lived most of her adult life in New York City, the center of American poetry writing and publishing in her day. But she is buried in Logan, Utah, her birthplace and hometown.
Advance Praise for Mrs. Ramsay’s Knee

Idris Anderson’s capacious imagination and intelligence come alive in what she calls “the fluctuating waters of myth and history” and illuminates each moment of her resplendent and poignant collection of poems, Mrs. Ramsay’s Knee. The hope or drive of these poems—and their success—is to discover, as Virginia Woolf reminds us, “intimacy itself” and to lay claim to the knowledge that lies deep inside the landscape of our desires.

—Michael Collier

Encountering news photographs, paintings, and remembered private moments in many places, Idris Anderson's poems respond to love and grief, memories and catastrophes, beauty and suffering, by tracing visual compositions, real or imagined—blue water, green rocks, orange fire, gray smoke, yellow helmets, a white dress, mauve-pink firefight of bombed burning houses, purple figs, a black boot, and red mud, a red coat, the bright red blood of injury. In this book, insistent seeing can make damage alarmingly appealing to our greedy eyes, and yet is also a tender homage to love and beauty.

—Reginald Gibbons

It's rare, especially now, to encounter poems so well-made, so rich in traditional learning and painterly exactitude, that speak to the heart as strongly as to the mind. This is a memorable debut.

—Alan Williamson

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