



Equipoise: Poems

Kathleen Halme

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Equipoise, Kathleen Halme's second book of poems. Based in fact on the North Carolina coastline, the climate of these poems is one abundant with sun, salt water, and the paradoxical shore. Equally at home in formal meter and free verse, Halme explores the balancing pull of forces and discovers a refreshing version of mindfulness in daily life. Despite contemporary trends of cynicism and despair, Halme braves happiness. Even as she acknowledges that "We all live in fear/of shoreless feelings," such anxiety succumbs to her inclusive vision: "We are in the soup, singular/and swimming, roiling/with the isopods and copepods./ . . . We are delicious, surrendered to shells and jellies,/ every one soaking in sun."


For readers eager to experience "the ache of paradise," these poems chart consciousness with obvious pleasure: "Are you not a lucky one/you who hear your own mind think." But here is an intellect made lyrical. To celebrate the sensual core of experience, Halme's seemingly spare language is lush with assonance. In these poems, vowels have a cumulative effect, resounding, finally, in a grandiose vocative o of astonishment and joy.

Kathleen Halme's first book of poetry, *Every Substance Clothed*, winner of the 1995 University of Georgia Press Contemporary Poetry Series competition, was awarded the Balcones Poetry Prize. She completed her MFA in Creative Writing at the University of Michigan, where her work was awarded the Hopwood Creative Writing Award. Halme is a 1997-98 recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Poetry Fellowship. She is associate professor of English at Western Washington University in Bellingham.

"Here is a volcanically poised and deliciously balanced book of meditative graces, of provisional lyric holdings, of sumptuous meditations shored against the ruins."-Edward Hirsch

"Most prominent is Halme's sensual commitment to language; her poems resonate with a phonetic lushness illuminating her intelligent imagery. These poems are enjoyable most notably for the pleasure of pure sound. . . . Gently peppered into her poems are flavors of mysticism, portrayed by an efficient and clever selection of words, which result in a pleasurable and unexpected unfolding. Overall, these poems

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