

Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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Rope.

Deming, Alison Hawthorne (Author)

Oct 2009. 108 p. Penguin, paperback, \$18.00. (9780143116363). 811.

In her fourth collection, Deming combines aesthetic splendor with serpentine intellect and wry humor in richly detailed and supple poems that reflect the equipoise she perceives in the symbiosis of art and science, which she describes as “a system of checks and balances.” Attuned to the intricacy of and threats to the living world, she ponders such ancient interconnections as that between rock and roots, salt and humans, and takes enraptured inventory, citing “Douglas fir, bats and gnats / beetles and moss, flying squirrel.” Dispatches from an experimental forest in Oregon, Prague, Oaxaca, Montana, her family home in New England, an airport where soldiers are heading to Iraq, Deming’s poems are deeply anchored in the earth and oriented to the stars. She contemplates paintings and fiber art, Greek myths and lab experiments, the search for extraterrestrial life, tree time, and the many meanings of flight. Deming’s poems are radiant with curiosity and passion, even as she draws on a deep reservoir of calm, which allows her to face the morally odious and the transcendently beautiful with equal receptivity and brio.

— *Donna Seaman*