



Hartley Field: Poems

Connie Wanek

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The poems in Hartley Field are by turns witty and amusing, lyrical and moving. But always they are clear and -direct.

Wanek writes clever, closely observed poems on subjects as diverse as "Butter" and "The Hammer," work which is in the tradition of Francis Ponge and Pablo Neruda. These are often humorous and are enormous fun to read. Similarly, a number of poems focus upon children's games and activities ("Checkers" and "Jump Rope," among others), and explore them physically and psychologically.

What is most remarkable about this collection is the consistent originality of the imagery and elegance of language. In the poem "Late September," we find "a plumed of smoke hand-feeding the wind." The object poem "Lemon" observes that the fruit has "bumpers on both ends like a Volkswagon." A racoon advancing into a dark yard is described as "a creature both manly and womanly/capable of force or seduction." Here is the first stanza of the elegiac "After Us."

Rain is falling through the roof. And all that prospered under the sun the books that opened in the morning and closed at night, and all day turned their pages to the light. . . .

Joyce Sutphen says of Wanek, "Nothing about what she says or sees is routine...(Hartley Field) is a book of revelations: in poem after poem, some ordinary object or event is split open with such keen tenderness that the heart is caught off guard."

Connie Wanek was born in 1952 and lives in Duluth, Minnesota. She is the author of *Bonfire*, published in 1997 by New Rivers Press. Her poems have appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Poetry*, *The Virginia Quarterly*, *Country Journal*, and many other publications. She has been awarded fellowship support from the Arrowhead Regional Arts Council and The Jerome Foundation.

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