

Thursday, May 07, 2015
Blog post by Jack Kimball

Swimming Home
Vincent Katz
Nightboat Books, New York

*To be always in the present
Even when that present is dying*

Pragmatic sounding, sobering, almost a religious idea or if it's just a statement, it's a statement about statement.

Can we call this observable practice?

*..we're not going too fast —
.. All I care for now is poetry*

*..There is no other way
You must walk across the bridge and take a right*

Once you take care into practice, everything you write sticks to the provision, lending it "ballast." Lines, above, snipped from "Barge," a central poem of 19 parts placed in the middle of Vincent Katz's *Swimming Home*. "Barge" tosses around eventful interruptions, "a bunch of turkey buzzards overhead," "A wind whipping rain seasonal.." as well as compressed argument, "Roots equal leaves in sky," "Bitter and poor, in the sense of not having enough." There is deadeye polemic in five parts of "Barge" referencing Americans' and others' lethal geopolitics around Israelis and Palestinians waging a "low-intensity civil war." To be present, you take in the best and the worst.

"Barge" is joined by many other poems observing water and the shore, "The Dive," "A Quick Dip," "The Sea," "The Garden by the Sea," as well as the 10-page title piece that offers prose impressions of Oslo, a swimmer thinking his way through currents of muscle movement and sensation parallel to motions and acts remembered or anticipated. Bicycling uphill "Esther was in front, and Oslo could see her back shifting from side to side as she increased her effort, and he suddenly imagined her thighs.. the exercise they must be undertaking to propel her.."

Every poem in *Swimming Home* takes on poetry. Statement is what matters,

*Poetry can't mean that much, everyone asleep
Another year, another weight of looking and thinking
About everyone, and then there is just music*

The last part of “Barge” goes on “But what I mean most of all / Is stop — // Morning sun through poplars..” The poems here stop, start to observe, ‘not too fast,’ awake to the sun and all that is present, “simple things the world / voices, different tones.” You get inside the observation that stays with you now, jetting off, “Spending time, and passing it, inside or out, / One or another, yet able to be with all of it, / Separate, but somehow both or all at once.”

Swimming Home collects over a hundred pages of poems in three sections of short pieces, first, multiple-part poems, second, and a third set of pieces, some titled as exercises, that openly flirt with slipping from presence but stay with it, staying with what can and cannot be said,

*Definitions, where pool ends, where edge of border ends,
path of rocks around trees planted in border,
furniture, chairs and table around.*

Posted by Jack Kimball at 5:50 AM

http://pantaloons.blogspot.com/2015_05_01_archive.html