



2015

Trust Rust

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Lane, William H. Trust Rust. Gettysburg, PA: Middle Street Bindery, 2015.

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Description

Trust Rust is a book of poems rooted in the landscape of south central Pennsylvania that explore the ambiguities of our relationship with nature and one another.

Keywords

Poetry, Pennsylvania, Nature

Disciplines

English Language and Literature | Poetry

Publisher

Middle Street Bindery

ISBN

9780692030820

The Acrobat

In the library,
I stand on one foot between shelves
and breathe the sour breath of the stacks.

What can be done
when truths accumulate
and weigh this much?

In a book tightly closed in my hand,
rivers grow shorter, fail to reach the sea,
glistening as they soak into the sand.

Old House

They could come back,
might rise out of swampy ground
and drift up the hill to the old house
with its small, cracked panes
broken loose, clicking in the spring breezes,
and long dangles of wallpaper leering within.

Somebody's grandpa pushed a junk mower
through mint and dream ivy
on that wet hill.

Who remembers his fast walk now
and his rigid grin? And his wife's
daffodils, wagging unrepentant on the bank?

She was wiry as a little cedar
bristling with dark blue berries;
he, in his tight white tee-shirts, more a stump feeding moss.

If they come, will it be sin
makes them chuckle and bend
in those rank rooms,
or the smell of mock orange
now in late spring
commanding the wind?

Once, the house had a new skin
of roof shingles over its softening pale boards
that peek through now where the shingles have yielded
to sun and wind.

Now, the owner lives behind the hill;
but the house has moved on, tall
in its new life as a dead thing
to be felt with a hand and kept in mind.

You can see a cracked angel in the cracked glass
if you stand still and lean a little to the left.
leaning right, or just standing back, the old house
waits more like a spare self,

ready to follow you: uphill, downhill
for the rest of your life.

Little River

Half a mile from its elegant gleam,
I found I couldn't live
without my walk
every day down to the little river.

Free man raising empty hands,
I had a way of leaning forward
as I stepped toward the brown river's flow
glittering behind trees

adapted to bottom lands,
pan flat and rich
with trapped water
mirroring sky:

fan-leaved Lord Catalpa
and Lady Sycamore, rising
grand in her bark
of motley ivory, green, black, and mauve.

Somebody's crazy sorrow surely shows
in that massive trunk
while his pleasure trembles unchained nearby
in those lordly male leaves

blessed by wind; but the river flows by
like a thing unknown and unnoticing,
brown and strong and sleek from spring rains
being just what it is and no more.