



Family Room

Yasuhiro Yotsumoto

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"What is so arresting here is the casual everydayness that welcomes strangeness as the most matter of fact part of reality. Typical of the book's achievement, the poem feels as much in the wife's voice as the husband's. There is nothing forced or artificial going on. The poem is universal without being in any way universalising; the voice speaking trusts the power of what one sees and feels to carry the poem. Yotsumoto's achievement appears in the ease with which the everyday, the earthy, the dream-like, and the bizarrely imagined all glide into each other, are there with a careful equality. The calm of the poem, the tone of everyday realism with no craving for effect, makes the image of the last two lines so startling: 'silence' this 'strange animal' brought so lovingly back from the grave. Part of what is so attractive in Yotsumoto's poetry is that it bypasses the supposed dichotomy between experimental and traditional poetry, or (the same idea posed more accurately) the false choice of much contemporary North American and Australian poetry between an abstract/cerebral poetry that flees sentimentality by avoiding engagement with the world (L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry at its extreme) and poetry as an all too prosaic description of the outside world, often in the form of tedious autobiographic recount. Yotsumoto's poetry (and Tanikawa's even more powerfully) demonstrate how surprise, innovation and true poetic experimentation serve to bring us closer to the everyday world - not to flee from it." -Cordite Poetry Review

Yasuhiro Yotsumoto was born in Osaka, Japan in 1959 and grew up mostly in Hiroshima. His first collection of poetry was 'A Laughing Bug' in 1991. Since then 7 collections of his poetry have been published, including 'Muddy Calender' (coauthored with Inuo Taguchi, 2008), 'Starboard of My Wife' (2006), 'Golden Hour' (2004). His awards include the Hagiwara Sakutarō Award and his poems have been translated into more than 10 languages. His latest translations into Japanese include 'Kid' by Simon Armitage.

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