

Do You Know Me? Do I Know You?

DO YOU KNOW ME? *Do I Know You?*



A Collection of Poems
by
Herbert Spohn

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A retired therapist shares hard-fought wisdom and a little whimsy in this collection of original poetry. The subjects of aging, depression and interpersonal relationships are explored in depth in these poems, with the message that none of them is easy. Not even the satisfactions of posterity are a salve to the poet-"I take no comfort that in dying / I live on in the memory of others," Spohn writes in an untitled poem. The book is separated thematically, so that "Aging" gets its own section, alongside chapters with headings like "Love, Loss and Longing," and "Depression," among others. The poems are brutally direct, and the language largely eschews ornament...The lines are broken into free-verse fragments that hew closely to the rhythms of prose. "Love no longer walks beside you. / In that moment you are truly alone," he writes in one poem. "All that your passing left me / Is a question. / Why?" he writes forlornly in another. He does not transform his experience, but merely transcribes it. This is why the more whimsical and imaginative chapters provide some relief, especially a chapter in which ordinary objects are imbued, with some light alchemy, with the attitudes of grumpy old people. Here a chair complains of a hutch and a lamp that "I am an alien in their midst," and a saltshaker's "ardent feelings for a vase nearby / Cooled when her mums began to fade." We all age, it's true. Yet small personifications, like this empathetic saltshaker's love for a vase of flowers, differentiate our suffering and make it the subject of worthwhile poetry. A predominantly dark collection of verse. -Kirkus Discoveries

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