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Ramshackle Ode

By Keith Leonard



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Ramshackle Ode By Keith Leonard

A sparkling debut collection from a Pushcart Prize-nominated poet that makes an ecstatic argument for living

Containing joy and suffering side by side, *Ramshackle Ode* offers elegies and odes as necessary partners to bring out the greatest power in each. By turns celebratory, meditative, tender, and rebellious, these poems reimagine the divisions and intersections of life and death, the human and the natural world, the brutal and the beautiful. Time and again, they choose hope.

From an award-winning young poet in the tradition of Marie Howe, Walt Whitman, Gerald Stern, and contemporary American bard Maurice Manning, *Ramshackle Ode* presents a new voice singing toward transcendence, offering the sense that, though this world is fragile, human existence is a wonderfully stubborn miracle of chance.



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Editorial Review

Review

"Intriguing and triumphant, Leonard's collection embodies the subject matter it so aptly depicts, whether it's a storm or steeple or meadow."—*Booklist*

"In his lovely first collection, Pushcart Prize nominee Leonard offers poems both tough and tender about becoming a man—effectively so, as these works are not full of false bravado but touching reflection...Charmed and sturdy poems for a wide range of readers."—*Library Journal*

"Keith Leonard's *Ramshackle Ode* is a brilliant, heart breaking, sometimes funny, always surprising celebration of love and attachment, of all the ways our connection to others—friends, lovers, children—makes us hostages to fortune. The force of imagination and the urgent desire to praise, to care for and cultivate is always at every point tested by the equal force of depredation and defilement. This is a terrific and memorable first book. Leonard's voice is powerfully distinct and fresh, and it's one I'm sure we'll be hearing with gratitude for years to come."—Alan Shapiro

"The poems in this solid collection offer praise for the everyday world, even if coming to terms with that world entails a measure of surrender. That world is given to us, we are included in it, and yet the heart and the mind must be pried open in order to receive and realize how much of that world may lie beyond us. Poetry is the ages-old means to see beyond, to glimpse what's out there and to praise even what we don't yet know. These poems do not linger on grief; instead, they reveal a heart that has been opened to love and a mind flung out to wonder. That is the solemn human journey. No rest for the wicked, is the common expression. No rest for the joyful and compassionate either. That is the discovery these poems field, like pop-flies and grounders in a backyard baseball game played so long ago in youth it has the resonance of myth. These poems have earned their wisdom, and this book is a gift I happily hold in my hands."—Maurice Manning

"If you want to know what the good, serious, work—by which I mean digging and plowing and axing and building and sewing and holding—of joy—which includes, yes, no kidding, sorrow, loss, heartbreak, the whole abundant mess—might make of the world, of a family, of a life—*goddamn, goddamn*—I think this book might give you an idea. It's kind of the hardest work, joy. Which makes *Ramshackle Ode* one of the hardest working books I've read in a long time."—Ross Gay

"*Ramshackle*. Synonyms: *neglected, gone to rack and ruin, beat-up*—and aren't we? Isn't our house in tumbledown? Somedays it seems it's all getting to be too much now, that you're beat up just by living. *Ramshackle Ode* is more than a great book of poems, it's a tent revival, a people's sweaty redemption. Keith Leonard has come right in the nick of time to remind us: inside each our hearts thumps an ecstatic hot night of healing, and raise that tambourine! —hallelujah be, there's still a song, goddamnit there's still a chance to sing."

—Rebecca Gayle Howell

From the Back Cover

"*Ramshackle Ode*" is a brilliant, heartbreaking, sometimes funny, always surprising celebration of love and attachment. Alan Shapiro "A sparkling debut collection from a Pushcart Prize nominated poet that makes an ecstatic argument for living" Embracing joy together with suffering, "*Ramshackle Ode*" offers elegies and

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About the Author

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