

Gift of Intimacy

Reflecting on Scott Lubbock's poetry.

ON THE WAY TO WATER
by Scott Lubbock, Self-published, 2004, \$12.

"I walk, I listen, I write. These are the three things I do most of the time. That's how I am in the world."

Scott Lubbock, voted Eugene's favorite poet in *EW*'s Best of Eugene polling this year, is a dedicated walker as well as a counselor and listener. His listening practice and his daily walks both inform his poetry. "My poetry grows from the combined process of thought and physical movement," he says. "Pretty much everything that ends up on paper has been fully composed while walking. That's where the rhythm from my poetry comes from."

Sometimes, walking and landscape also supply subject matter, bringing about lyrical accents in Lubbock's 2004 poetry collection, *On the Way to Water*. But even then, human relationships remain at the core of Lubbock's poems. By extension, these texts constitute explorations of the self, its desires and conundrums. They are tales of love, pain, loss, desire, dysfunction; narrative poems in which the protagonists are lovers, former husbands and wives, family members, friends, patients, strangers. They give a voice, or at least regard, to the wounded, the hunted, the downtrodden and marginalized.

"A poem is meant to round up my experience but it's not necessarily history or autobiography," Lubbock cautioned. "I incorporate what I see, watch, listen to. I'm gathering informa-

tion all the time so that they become part of my experience."

A majority of the poems feature a first person narrator interacting with protagonists represented by the entire range of personal pronouns. The result is a complex choreography involving I and You and We, He and She and They, in constantly shifting associations and partnerships. As befits pronouns, their identities are unstable and permutable. The narrator's personas range from implied author to the status of "other." The addressee may be the implied reader, the narrator's lover, or a despised protagonist.



The poems may be constructed as running commentaries often punctuated by questions, scenes as in a short story or drama, or speculation over a snatched fragment of conversation. Most poems give in to the urge to speak directly to a second person.

This need to speak (and write) is born of a complex state of desire, a longing characterized as a "deep and eager thirst" that propels the narrator "on the way to water." Besides the title poem, a number of pieces probe aspects of this metaphor: "Mostly Water," "What He Hears," "Up River," "Bread Tells Hunger," "A Full Admission," "Concert/ Variations," "The Distance Between Oregon and Then" and "Concerto for Violin and Fly Rod."

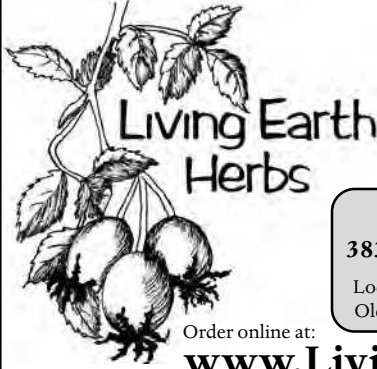
Tension arises out of contrary needs: Giving in, or letting go? Speaking, or observing and listening? Being together, or being alone? The narrator aspires to unite into a single element each pair of opposites within and without, thus finding his voice right at the "bleeding knot at [his] throat," and hearing "the single sound, thin and pure and / buoyant, that denies nothing."

"The End of Writing" properly closes the collection with a challenge to the reader to not forget how vulnerable the poet has made himself by sharing his poetry. For what is said in those poems is intensely felt, unshielded, and a gift of intimacy.

Lubbock's book is available at Tsunami Bookstore or from the author at P.O. Box 5250, Eugene, OR 97405. **EW**

BOOK NOTES: Oregon Book Awards Author Tour readings with finalists **Carmen Bernier-Grand**, **Bob Welch**, **Maxine Scates** and **Laton Carter**, 7:30 pm 10/20, Tsunami Books ... **Alice Fulton** reads, 7:30 pm 10/20, Valley Library, OSU, Corvallis ... **Simon Winchester** speaks, 7:30 pm 10/20, Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, Portland. \$25, college/seniors \$18, high school \$5 ... **Myla Goldberg** reads from *Wickett's Remedy*, 7:30 pm 10/20, Powell's on Burnside, Portland ... **Chris Crutcher** (*The Sledding Hill*, *Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes*) speaks, 4 pm 10/21, Downtown Library ... **Gregory Maguire** reads from *Son of a Witch*, 7:30 pm 10/21, First Unitarian Church, Portland ... **Larry Kane** reads from *Lennon Revealed*, 7:30 pm 10/22, Powell's on Hawthorne, Portland ... Poets **Mark Conway**, **Beth Lylys** and **Nin Andrews** read, 4 pm 10/23, Tsunami Books ... The First Fiction Fall Tour presents **Karen Olsson**, **Lisa Selin** and **Victoria Vinton**, 6:30 pm 10/24, XV, Portland ... Oregon Writers Colony presents the 2005 winners of the OWC contest "Short Stories ... Both True and Imagined," 7 pm 10/24, Powell's in Beaverton ... Editor **Peter Maravelis** and contributors to *San Francisco Noir* read, 7:30 pm 10/24, Powell's on Hawthorne, Portland ... Actor **Chris Elliot** reads from his debut novel *The Shroud of the Thwacker*, 7:30 pm 10/25, Powell's on Hawthorne, Portland ... **Craig Lesley** reads from *Burning Fence*, 7 pm 10/26, Knight Library, UO ... A Reading of T.S. Eliot's "Four

Quarters," 8 pm 10/26, Luna. \$3-\$5 ... **Sarah Vowell** benefit event for Write Around Portland, 7:30 pm 10/26, First Congregational Church, Portland. www.writearound.org ... John Witte, poet and editor of the *Northwest Review*, reads, 8pm 10/27, Knight Library, UO ... **David Wolman** reads from *A Left Hand Turn Around the World*, 7 pm 10/27, UO Bookstore ... An evening of ghost stories from *Ghosts at the Coast: The Best of Ghost Story Weekend, Vol. II*, 7 pm 10/27, Tsunami Books ... **H.W. Brands** reads from *Andrew Jackson*, 7:30 pm 10/27, Powell's on Burnside, Portland ... **Davy Rothbart** discusses *Found* magazine and reads from his short story collection *The Lone Surfer of Montana, Kansas*, 9 pm 10/28, Sam Bond's Garage. \$6 ... **Clive Cussler** reads from *Polar Shift*, 7pm 10/28, Gerlinger Lounge, UO. 346-2442 ... **Dava Sobel** reads from *The Planets*, 7:30 pm 10/28, Powell's on Burnside, Portland ... **R.A. Salvatore** reads from *Promise of the Witch-King*, 1 pm 10/29, Powell's in Beaverton ... **General Janis Karpinski** reads from *One Woman's Army*, 7:30 pm 10/31, Powell's on Burnside, Portland ... "Writing Life: Should it Be Memoir or Fiction?" lecture by **Jennifer Lauck**, 6:30 pm 11/3, Baker Downtown Center. \$10 donation for non-Mid-Valley Willamette Writers members ... **Annie Proulx**, **John Daniel Clemens Starck** and **Elizabeth Woody** read and sign, 7:30 pm 11/3, Tower Theatre, Bend.



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