



That Beauty in the Trees

Poems

RON SMITH

Moving effortlessly from Virginia to Italy and beyond, Ron Smith’s new volume responds with a range of emotions from humor to horror and with a variety of forms from the sonnet to visually expressive organic shapes. The book’s forty-three pieces gather themselves into three flights that hover above and touch down among the politics of memory and the psychology of beauty. With inspiration drawn from memoir, myth, history, fiction, and the visual arts, *That Beauty in the Trees* presents, ponders, and sometimes judges the actions, fates, and aesthetics of not only the author’s friends and family but also legendary and historical figures, including Achilles, Catullus, George Washington, Edgar Allan Poe, H.D., Ezra Pound, and many more.

RON SMITH was poet laureate of Virginia from 2014 to 2016. He is the author of four poetry collections: *Running Again in Hollywood Cemetery*, *Moon Road*, *Its Ghostly Workshop*, and *The Humility of the Brutes*. Smith currently serves as writer-in-residence at St. Christopher’s School in Richmond, Virginia.

PRaise FOR *THAT BEAUTY IN THE TREES*

“Whether in the shadow of the towers’ forever falling, the confounding Deep South, or his young sharpshooter father drawing straws on Guadalcanal, Ron Smith encounters the sublime in memory, the wry, and the profane in his new collection.”—Linda Parsons

“Smith grapples with history as it verges into myth, in poems that re-render the recent and distant past with rigor and vision.”—David Groff

“*That Beauty in the Trees* ignites one’s passions again and again with inspired plainsong exploding abruptly into poetry. Smith’s range sprawls over many visions and testimonies of antiquity, memory, and moral declaration.”—Ron Powers

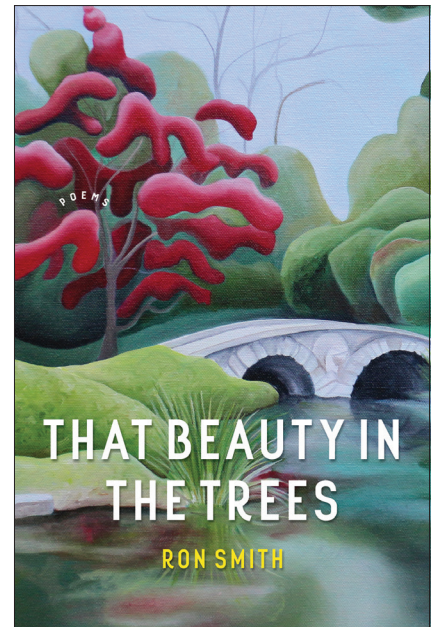
“In Smith’s eyes, ears, and vision, a poem has a very good chance of finding out just how good it can be.”—Cornelius Eady

And now, the florid maples

sprayed with amethyst,
ocher oaks and crimson dogwoods,
incandescent jasmine of the hickories,
carmine fan
of this sassafras flaring
in the Salmacis-clutch
of a scarlet woodbine can
thrill any lovers’ stroll into baffled tears.

Why can’t we feel this all the time, whatever it is?

—from “That Beauty in the Trees”



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