



Zirconia

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Winner of the 2001 Alberta Prize, Chelsey Minnis' book represents a progressive yet individualized position in the galaxy of truly contemporary poetry. With formal invention and a wild personae, ZIRCONIA compels one to follow gem-strewn trails of feminine intuition, savagery, ennui, fantasy, and intimacy to their diabolically fruitful conclusions.

Zirconia Details

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Author : Chelsey Minnis

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From Reader Review Zirconia for online ebook

Vanessa says

I'm really trying to give contemporary poetry a chance. This book does not make a good case for it.

Leah says

Wow. Yes. From the crevices of the carnal female brain comes Zirconia. Both dreamy and savage, Minnis voices the parts of our desires that are disgusting -- for things, for people, for power. The overuse of ellipses ensures that you read these poems with a strung out slur. I fucking loved this.

S. says

These poems were free and imaginative and often seemed to take the course of the thoughts of a patient lying on the analyst's couch, a bit of free association but in the end a cohesive story. I must say that after the wonderful opening poem, "A Speech about the Moon," (<http://fencebooks.fenceportal.org/pop...#>) it was hard for the other poems to keep pace. But there were a number of good ones, including "A Report on the Babies," and "Sternum." The latter, like most poems in the book, is set upon a continuous string of dotted lines ---

.....I can perceive your bared sternum in the V.....
.....the perfumed.....
.....
.....planar
.....bone with the
...jasmine hinthas to be touched softly as I see the hardest....
.....body parts as vulnerable
.....
.....and the raw-edged V is.....
...splitting downwards towards the reverse V of your crotch.....
.....as you
.....perhaps.....
.....want to be torn in half.....

I was not crazy about this layout, but definitely enjoyed the humor and spirit of the poems.

Opal McCarthy says

likes how the ellipses/gems are used here. to suggest a shadow-self, 'kneeling in milk near frayed wire'.

and the poems are hilarious too, create a sneaky comfort with their bizarre obsessions, as in 'report on the

babies': 'a series of babies stronger and stranger than ever before has been peeking at me'...'baby with bow scotch-taped to the head'...'They say "I love you...Come hold me over your head so I can swim...My parents don't know...I want you to have this chip."

oh poems about sternums and sunburns and reindeer milk and head torturers - this is beautiful stuff.

Lightsey says

Actually, I've gone through this once, but that never seems like enough.

I'm uncertain how to read the dot dot dot device. I can't help hearing a lot of pauses in my mind, which is truly strange, given that the poems are actually not disjunctive. I kind of envision Minnis dancing around during the pauses, doing a sort of nightclub act, actually.

Chris says

I really like Minnis's voice in her work, though I definitely think this is the weakest of the three collections I have read of hers. She is both funny and gruesome at the same time, quite often, which is quite a feat.

Anyway, there's not much more I would here that I did not say when I read Bad Bad, so I'll keep this review short.

Rauan says

there are so many ways to not like this book---to hate it even---and i am tempted, O, i am tempted
But, i love this book..... (kind of, sometimes, mostly--??? i mean i'd love to break up with this book, but, then i open her up, and,.....)

p.s. browse this book before you buy it!!

tENTATIVELY, cONVENIENCE says

I got this bk from my girlfriend, Amy Catanzano. Chelsey & Tina Brown Celona are 2 of Amy's best friends. I'm reading 1 of Tina's bks now. "Zirconia" is probably the most sensual poetry bk I've ever read. Minnis is hyper-aware of color & texture. I almost HATE to do this but I actually ENDORSE this bk.

Lately, under Amy's influence & under the influence of some digging into my own archives, I've been thinking about how many different lifestyles & professions the poets I've known & 've been friends w/ come from. Perhaps more than any other creative activity that I pay attn to, poetry is a sortof 'great equalizer' - being a poet cuts across all sorts of class lines in ways that're of great interest to me.

I skimmed thru other GR reviews of this bk. They're all? mostly? positive? Does Minnis 'deserve' this? One reviewer doesn't like Minnis's extensive use of dots - her ellipsi? ellipses? I like them. Ordinarily when

words are spaced across the page in poetry there's just 'space' there. Here it's as if Chelsey makes the reader conscious of just how much space there is. As w/ zeros, the dots are place-keepers, markers. They make, for me, each of the words PLACED rather than placed. The number of dots between words may be 'arbitrary' rather than counted but they still connote, denote, note, jot.

When I read Chelsey's references to material, I KNOW what it's like to touch these materials, I know the sensuality of it. When I read Minnis' intense psychopathic violent fantasies, her masochistic frenzies, I KNOW what it's like to FEEL that intensely. What I DON'T KNOW is where Minnis is really at.

I hear from Amy that Chelsey no longer writes poetry. Did I get that right? Does she, to take a page from Amy, get off the page? Or does she only get off on the page? Or get off from the page? When I read: "...or a glass candy dish of semen.." what am I reading? Is it a sexual fantasy? Does she imagine milking a cock into a receptacle ordinarily reserved for party favors? Such eroticism is both delectable & dangerous. The thin line between lust & psychosis is a razor's edge here - as it quite probably is everywhere. But Minnis elucidates it much better than most.

& there's humor. "REPORT ON THE BABIES" is wonderful. It all adds up to a person hyper-aware of herself, her surroundings. A person who's really paying attn. Where does it stop? Where does it go? Where is it going? What are the limits of what she pays attn TO?

"The oxide of zirconium, obtained as a white powder, and possessing both acid and basic properties. On account of its infusibility, and brilliant luminosity when incandescent, it is used as an ingredient of sticks for the Drummond light" - en.wiktionary.org/wiki/zirconia

Minnis' bk illuminates alot w/ a bright white lite but she leaves, 'inevitably', alot unexplained too. For every thing she shines her lite on, she creates shadows around herself; pretending, in a way, to show us a hard look, she hides a soft vulnerable place in shadows that cdn't be as deep as they are w/o the contrast of her searchlight.

Every ellipsis tells a story that the fragments only hint at. They're like Armand Schwerner's Tablets.

Valerie says

This is the first book by Chelsey Minnis I've read and I really enjoy her style--I am going to have to pick up her other books.

Her writing is a lot of fun, and I've never seen her technique for breaking lines before: she fills the spaces in her poems with periods. She spreads out the poem this way and the entire page is full. Theoretically, I really like this, but in practice, I feel like it spreads the poem out a little too much. It isn't bad, but it feels just a tiny bit too slow. I liked her few poems without the technique better. I really wanted to love the periods because it is new and visually attractive. She has a few prose poems in the book, but no poems with traditional line breaks.

Her word choices and images are unusual, striking, and kind of demented. The poems have a great sense of humor.

Her titles were usually just one word. I wish they were longer, because I feel like she could have come up

with some great titles.

I love seeing someone doing something new. I am excited to read her other books. This is another library book that I am going to have to buy!

My favorites in this book: (I am having a hard time finding poems online for Minnis. There are lots and lots of reviews that include parts of poems, but not whole poems)

Report on the Babies

Aquamarine Three Paragraphs from the bottom of page is the poem.

The Skull Ring

A Speech About the Moon Click "Read a Little" at the top of the page.

Never says

Mostly this made me want to read Poemland again. There were things I liked about it, but I just wasn't feeling this for whatever reason.

Leslie says

These poems are like sophisticated Babes in Toyland lyrics with fewer curse words and fancier punctuation. Mind you, this is such high praise.

Meg says

this is a 5-star with a caveat:

i really don't think her use of the is really effective. i mean i don't see how it serves a purpose and when i do i don't think it needs to be so often. otherwise...

the poems are brutal and fantastic; really imaginative. the titles are the best and are surprisingly interrelated by some gory decadence--cherry; shockwave; sunburns; champagne; big doves; the skull ring. perhaps her greatest contribution to contemporary poetry is the title "supervermillion [go right into] baby vamp" which it does. effortlessly.

last poem is perfectly tender:

The aquamarine becomes invisible when you place it into the sea. It seems like birds should have aquamarine beaks that they can dip into the sea and therefore surprise the fish. They could also sing aquamarine songs. If you borrowed someone's aquamarine, swallowed it, and jumped into the sea, then you

would not become invisible. But your soul would become visible and all the fish would try to bite you. If you put an aquamarine onto any surface other than the sea, then it should be visible. If you put on an aquamarine choker and look in the mirror and don't see anything, then you must be the sea."

Mia says

Re-read this book because I love this book.

"as I beat gentleman rapists
with bronze statuettes
so that the blood
oozes down their handsome sideburns
or give them
a poisoned mushroom
of corsages and corsages of gunshot"

"If you put on an aquamarine choker and look in the mirror and don't see anything, then you must be the sea."

Shannon says

This is my second time reading Zirconia in full and I like her poetry the more I read it. Once you are comfortable reading her style and format, and get into the pace (I guess that's how it can be described?), it feels like Chelsey Minnis writes dream incantations disguised as poems. That's how it feels and I'm sticking by that statement. Very happy this book was placed in my hands five years ago and I held onto it. If you're interested in experimental poetry, definitely check out Zirconia.

Sally says

Where can I go with this book.
Where oh where oh where oh where.

Into the ocean, where fishes will bite me.
Into a town where the skull ring can make me diabolical and babies are arranged perfectly equidistant and diagonal from each other.
Into beautiful furs and shockwaves and sunburns and torturers' ballrooms.
Into uncut grasses and gardens where I can beat rapists with bronze statuettes and flowers in my hair.
Into a tropical forest where the beautiful fire-orange genitals of birds of paradise sire my madness.

I want this book tattooed on my brain.
