



Voyager

Srikanth Reddy

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Srikanth Reddy's second book of poetry probes this world's cosmological relation to the plurality of all possible worlds. Drawing its name from the spacecraft currently departing our solar system on an embassy to the beyond, *Voyager* unfolds as three books within a book and culminates in a chilling Dantean allegory of leadership and its failure in the cause of humanity. At the heart of this volume lies the historical figure of Kurt Waldheim—Secretary-General of the U.N. from 1972-81 and former intelligence officer in Hitler's Wehrmacht—who once served as a spokesman for humanity while remaining silent about his role in the collective atrocities of our era. Resurrecting this complex figure, Reddy's universal voyager explores the garden of forking paths hidden within every totalizing dream of identity.

Voyager Details

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Author : Srikanth Reddy

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From Reader Review Voyager for online ebook

Erica says

An immense work. Haunting, lyric, and perhaps the most successful erasure I've ever read. The three erasures construct three different takes on the horrors and strangeness of the twentieth century. The third, the bulk of the book, moves the fastest for me and is the most narrative, telling a surreal story embedded in the nightmare-scape of a world confronted with its own capacity for destruction. Still, it avoids the angst and irony so much of contemporary writing turns to to engage with the legacy of violence left for us by the past century of mechanized warfare. And finds a kind of faith despite it all, in the very ability to relinquish faith. Stunning.

Kristin says

An incredible effort by Reddy, one of my favorite poets. I've read a lot of erasures, but this one blew me away. Each page is carefully crafted with a masterful wit. Brilliant.

Ashley says

Not bad, but a little too esoteric and highbrow for me. Practically inaccessible for a casual reader.

Aaron Bauer says

The book is made up of three long poems (or four, depending how you think about it). The harsh juxtaposition in form between each poem helps keep the reader's attention fresh in what otherwise might be very dense work.

Bekah says

Three part book of erasures from Dr. Weldham's, a Nazi data analysis and later part of UN, memoir on his life. Really interesting how Reddy using Weldham's voice to critic and at moments sympathizes with him and includes what feels like Reddy's own voice. Great read!

C. Varn says

Srikanth Reddy's second book of poetry does so much with erasure as a technique, he may have changed my distaste for it. Voyager uses the memoir of Kurt Waldheim, the Secretary-General of the UN exposed as an SS officer as a basis and creates a political poetics that doesn't feel didactic "The World is the World" but is

it the only possible one? What is our capacity for destruction and redemption? Reddy does so much here just with removing chunks of the words in a way that is both haunting and lyrical.

Lou Last says

An Erasure work of the memoir 'In the Eye of the Storm' by Kurt Waldheim, Secretary-General of the U.N. from 1972-81, with a concealed history as former intelligence officer in Hitler's Wehrmacht.

from Book Three

[...]

White was his wing
working in the dark
as I listened with increasing doubt

to this elaborate script.
It was extremely complicated
—full of traps I could not see—

but I agreed to play my part.
My role was to speak
to Mohammed the Revolutionary.

Under the world
that able guide awaited,
intent on the secret of everything.

True form
he hinted,
setting up a little house of cards,

never promises to remain.
I suggested that we be off
and thus left,

a post-mortem figure
in byzantine constraints
discussing the real

with everyone I met
at the funeral of fact.
Mohammed complained

of injustice,
turning from the world,
and called for vengeance

against fate.
Consequently,
I consulted his book

which I was told
in Teheran
had performed well.

It had neither inside
nor outside,
like holy

War
love
—its fabric absence.

Friends,
possessed of a clear mind,
if not happy,

he spoke on the erosion of wisdom.
I liked him,
his rage at spiritual irony,

his mastery of perhaps,
his head removed in the field
by the American people—

is that history?

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In the middle of that failed regime
I made a fire.
A messianic peacock appeared.

I must have looked surprised,
for, whirling, he said
Slogans slogans...

So I in silence
regarded the fire.
It was a loophole in time,

a detailed plan
of the the.
The Minister contented himself

with listening to the fire—
that indefatigable flag,
that red question we faced.

Distracted in the house,
the growing frostiness
seemed to make the distance watchful.

The eye does not lie.
Some form continues
and will continue.

Thus the flames,
countless and imponderable,
sink anew—

solved,
whole,
Holy.

(Srikanth Reddy has the words 'holy War' and again 'Holy' crossed out in the original text - couldn't be reproduced here)

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Karen says

I haven't read a lot of erasures so I don't really have a basis for comparison, but I feel like this was an incredibly impressive achievement.

Nicole says

A wonderful weekend for re-reading!

This was my **first proper erasure** (of *In the Eye of the Storm* by Kurt Waldheim), a man exposed after years as a Nazi SS officer. The way Reddy distilled this text, juxtaposing it with the concept of the *Voyager* mission is not only revolutionary, but enlightening. I love how this text seems so grounded and tangible, despite the fact the process which took it to get to this point is all about becoming distant from a subject.

I know nothing about Kurt Waldheim, but I feel like I do now. This multi-facted collected expertly reveals a haunting modern landscape of warfare and contemplation. It made me inspired to take on erasure projects of my own, attempting to understand how one can unfurl the truth of something by **reshaping it and giving it a new life**.

I'd give it a few more rereads for it to sink even further! Cool stuff.

Brad says

Re-read. Still amazing.

Hannah says

If you're not really interested in poetry and analysis, do not pick this book up. It took me hours to analyze this book, and although it is beautifully written, it is definitely not my cup of tea. I do see how some people would find it fascinating though.

Elizabeth says

I sat down yesterday and read this book in one big gulp, except that there is something about the structure and patterning of the book that prevents one from gulping too fast or getting, so to speak, an ice cream headache. In the past several years, I've read several interesting erasure projects, and I'd say that this is the one that gives itself most permission to move from the source into its own language and lyricism. Part of this might lie with Reddy's willingness to revisit passages for multiple readings/erasures. He shows how every reading is a re-reading and the initiation of a new text.

Antonio Delgado says

Its four parts structure offer different possibilities for war refuges, for diplomacy and for the inherited world. History and fiction cross over an interval of creation, only possible through the belief in a better place. However, such intent is not done with optimism but a cautious acceptance of our humanity and our capacity for destruction.

Laurel L. Perez says

One of the most intriguing, imaginative, and bold projects I have read recently. This erasure project seems to rely on structure and patterning to say something big. Written in such a way that each reading is a re-reading, a new look. The lyricism and construction is really what hold a greater narrative afloat, a surreal experience in a nightmare landscape of a world that comes face to face with it's own capacity to destroy itself from the inside-out.

Kai says

First, read it before looking up anything about it. Then come back to it.

It's a great project utilizing greatly varied prose between 'books,' and deserves multiple reads (and encourages it; it's quite enjoyable to read multiple times to pull more out of it). Historically compelling. You have very little to lose by reading it, and much to gain in my opinion. I won't say too much to let you engage with it without spoiling it.
