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Legitimate Dangers: American Poets Of The New Century



Synopsis

This groundbreaking anthology offers a broad and representative introduction to some of the most exciting, fresh voices on the contemporary poetry landscape by gathering together generous selections from the work of 85 younger American poets. The poets selected were born after 1960, published their first book within the last 10 years, and have no more than three books published. Some are the recipients of numerous awards, while others, who are making their first appearance, are quickly making significant contributions to twenty-first-century poetry. The poets include Rick Barot, Joshua Beckman, David Berman, Nick Flynn, Matthea Harvey, Terrance Hayes, Major Jackson, James Kimbrell, D.A. Powell, Spencer Reece, Matthew Rohrer, Rebecca Wolff, Kevin Young, Matthew Zapruder, Andrew Zawacki, and many others.

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Customer Reviews

I just got a copy of this book this morning and I've been reading it all day: all my favorite younger poets are here, including Pimone Triplett, Andrew Feld, Robin Schiff, and Major Jackson, and a lot of other interesting folk I hadn't heard of before. Just read an absolutely chilling love poem by Josh Bell, who is a new name for me. My first reaction is I couldn't recommend this anthology more highly. I love that David Berman from the Silver Jews has poems in here.

It should come as no surprise that a book called *Legitimate Dangers* would have a somewhat volatile effect. The world of poetry can often be a craven, petty, and divisive little industry, where people are more interested in attacking a new anthology than editing their own or actually writing a

few good poems themselves. As someone who isn't part of any poetry coterie or underworld but who consumes as many books of poetry a year as I can stomach, I actually purchased this anthology and read it. Many of the poems in here are fantastic. While the writers assembled have diverse aesthetic preferences (from the jazzy to the more formal, from the punky and edgy to the eloquent and mellifluous), for the most part, the poems themselves are meditative, lush, unsettling, and ambitious. Why pick on this particular anthology of younger poets and not another one? Have you read the book or are you merely disappointed that your friend's name isn't on the table of contents? William James said, "A great many people think they are thinking when they are merely rearranging their prejudices." How many other anthologies are out there who are equally eager to introduce the general readership to the avant-garde stylings of Joshua Beckman, Christine Hume, Lisa Jarnot, and Joyelle McSweeney and to the clearly more traditional poems of Rick Barot, Spencer Reece, and Greg Williamson in the same volume? This is not a comprehensive, democratic anthology, and it shouldn't be--it's already 500 pages long for crying out loud. If you read this book, chances are you'll discover some poems you like more than others. I did. That's true of any collection. This one happens to be filled to the brim with beautiful new writing. Is that such a bad thing?

I'm not sure how mikemike defines a Hispanic or Latino poet, but Richard Blanco was born in Spain and is of Cuban descent, Monica de la Torre was born in Mexico City and came to America in 1993, and Sabrina Orah Mark was born in Mexico. This is all in author bio notes in the book. You should do a little fact-checking before you start making accusations.

Finally, an anthology that takes a long hard look at the work of a new generation of poets. This is a handsome book showcasing a mix of writers. Some long established like Natasha Trethewey, Kevin Young, and Nick Flynn. Others including Monica De La Torre and Sherwin Bitsui are on the rise. I especially love the author photos--who doesn't want to know what these writers look like. It'll make it easier for me to spot them at AWP. Sarabande should be commended.

Just over six years since this was published, so I hauled it down again. Whether it will be seen as generation-defining a generation from now, who knows, but at this point I would say Marvin & Dumanis made some awfully good calls -- people whose work since this anthology has been very strong. Srikanth Reddy, Joanna Klink, Matthew Zapruder, Arielle Greenberg, Julianne Spahr, Joshua Beckmann, Ben Doyle, Noelle Kocot--not to forget my own chief favorite, G. C. Waldrep.

Even one of the dedicatees is freshly acclaimed; Amber Dermont is the author of novel-of-the-season *The Starboard Sea*. With 85 poets I suppose one is bound to hit a few winners, but I would say their batting average is looking very handsome at the moment.

Maybe I am not so smart as some of the people here on , but I think this is a great book, and even more especially, I think it is a great title. I really like how they call the poets *Dangers* because it sounds exciting. And you know what? it is exciting. Maybe dangers is normally not a good thing like signs that say DANGER you usually don't want to go there, but here it is like a trick because you want to go there. To the danger. But maybe it is the poems that are dangers. But it doesn't really matter. These are great poems. And great poets. And sometimes they are like dangers. I only don't give it 5 stars because it is a little bit long for a book.

This book reminds me of the Poulin anthology. It seems to start where the Poulin leaves off, providing a look at the poets much too young and new to be included in any of Poulin's editions. Some of the writers in here are among the most notorious in their generation, the ones that seem to be winning honor after honor, but the book has some surprises as well: interesting poets I read for the first time include Sabrina Mark, Lisa Jarnot, and Julianne Buchsbaum. A lot of the bigger names too: Nick Flynn, Kevn Young, Natasha Trethewey. Some surprise omissions, but that's true of all anthologies. All in all, a pretty good intro to the poets who are probably well-known to many of their peers but not to us older folk. Definitely has more experimental poems than a lot of the big anthologies, but there's also a surprising number of writers using meter.

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