



Book/Mark



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Review by J.R. Turek

SILENT MUSIC

By Richard Bronson

Padishah Press

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\$12.00, 95 pp, Paper

SILENT MUSIC is a contemplative collection of poems that beckons the reader to journey across thresholds of emotions, into rooms of auditory perceptions, down halls of sacred memories. These poignant snapshots of past, present, and future thread a mosaic of generations into a quilt of looking back, a present attempt to secure a future understanding, as in “Mount Zion:”

*“Mom, if you could speak a last testament,
what would you choose?”
as though deciding how to die
was not enough.*

In the title poem, we transcend the mundane, visual world we are acutely familiar with to become *aware of notes / at the edge of perception* – stringing sounds together to find a place of comfort, a realization of sounds we could not hear unless open to the possibilities:

*he discovered a new sensibility
in singing of rooms
everywhere,
a silent music.*

Like a IV-part concerto, family, quests, beliefs, and introspection weave through this collection. In “Father’s Day,” dedicated to William Bronson, M.D., *black bag in hand, Seven days a week he worked, disregarding the biblical injunction.* The nostalgia of house calls adds an endearing quality to the dedication of a doctor to his patients, a test of patience to his family who *waited in the double-parked Caddie*, and the dedicated father who spent Sunday afternoons *leading us through halls of dinosaurs, and trips to the Bronx Zoo -- ...and wild pony rides.* In *To His Violin*, a son questions his father’s violin with a subtle tone of jealousy, sympathy for the instrument for long years of abandonment. *Tell me of his passion. / Whisper his secrets / that I may understand.*

A plea for understanding and the possibility of ‘what if’ choices and decisions that shaped our lives shapes “Fugue” with *as when one gazes / between parallel mirrors and sees oneself perpetuated again and again / to a distant vanishing.*

This collection takes us to distant places; “At Tewkesbury Abbey” we see *...effigies on lids of stone sarcophagi ...sanguine smiles ...unconcerned by centuries passing, ...And I -- / trapped in this age of doubt / ...am sure of nothing / but the little joys & sufferings / of each moment.* With a subtle sense of humor, we journey from bow tie questions, a cloud ride, Wild West heroes, and a ‘mythical’ population explosion to staid embryonic issues and anthrax to musical interludes, as in “Wind Singer” *Can one describe the voice of a cello, / compare the timbre of flute and oboe?* and in “Reading After Nature While Listening to Shostakovich’s 2nd Piano Concerto” *Must I sing of all / lost peoples, / the millions dead?* And “Global Warming” that ends in emblematic formation, a visual creation of justification.

SILENT MUSIC speaks of celebrating each moment, embracing the past, and compelling hope for the future. “Prayer in the Cathedral” *to say your fervent prayer for the world.* With the assistance of the *Cosmic Choral Master* (“A Song of Stars”), *Silent Music* will intone whispers of tomorrow, a collection wealthy with poetic and literary detail and well-deserving of your attention.

***J. R. Turek** is Moderator of the Farmingdale Creative Writing Group, a Pushcart nominee, poet, editor, and dog mom residing in East Meadow, NY.*
