*The Book of Transparencies,* by Jefferson Navicky                  rev. by Lauren Ojinaga

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Jefferson Navicky is the archivist for the Maine Women Writers Collection and teaches English at Southern Maine Community College. He earned a B.A. in English Literature from Denison University, and an M.F.A. in writing and poetics from Naropa University. He has seven other publications, three of which are, *How Learning to Shoot Hoops Taught Me to Write*, *The Blood Artist*, and *The Stone House Where We Remembered Her*. His most recent publication, *The Book of Transparencies*, starts off with a professor and an unknown narrator who come across the original *The Book of Transparencies*, written as an autobiography by William Bolzebados. Bolzebados’s lover, Cleo, is a painter who enjoys destroying her artworks after completion. Yet, before that is done, she traces each artwork with charcoal on a transparent sheet so after they have been destroyed, all that remains are charcoal stencils of her works. After watching her create this type of artwork, Bolzebados makes its literary parallel. Throughout the rest of the book, there is a framing form which fits that of a biographer who works to restore the origin of *The* *Book of Transparencies* and its author’s life.

What Navicky does that is interesting is including Bolzebados’ first personal narration that is marked by a lack of punctuation, made up through a double space between thoughts so as to help the readers better understand. Yet it is unknown whether this personal narration is quoted from Bolzebado or simply his course of consciousness that cannot fit a particular framing device or articulate word choice. This is seen when he writes,

“I tried to move and recover but her scent came roaring back like a train exiting a tunnel and I awoke without memory of the terror only the sharp fading scent of metal and even that vanished before I hardly knew it was there a thief disappearing around a corner I lay in bed alone unable to recognize my surroundings but convinced that if I moved a six-foot seven-inch shadow of a man in the corner of the room would stride out and finish me.”

To the reader, this seems more like his incoherent thoughts. His lover, Cleo, also has a voice that is incorporated through her journal entries and notes on her own paintings.

Rather than memories being recorded, it is the impressions that impact the most and are documented. Bolzebados’s life is told in chronological order, beginning with Bolzebados’s relationship with his lover [Cleo] and their breakup; hospitalization due to a mental breakdown; a departure to Europe in 1972; a trip by rain to Berlin from Paris; an effective time in Europe; his 1973 return to America where *The Book of Transparencies* was then written around this time; finalized by his suicide in 1975. Unfortunately, Bolzebados nor his narrator are able to create a full narrative about his life, as it is unclear how he got from place to place, which is not included. This is demonstrated through the confusion of how he got from Ohio to New York City to Europe to Maine. Granted, *The Book of Transparencies* is a work of intervals/breaks, which explains the irregular narration broken down through different voices.

This work aims to address mental states, yet the language used is nonconceptual as objects and external movements become the focus, except their existence is not used to explain any other type of thought processes or determined actions. Such is seen through; “canvas leaning against the wall,” “your coat limp over the back of the chair,” “a glass of water when you wake thirsty,” “the same six songs over and over until they seem into the fabric of the night colored room,” and “a bookshelf for your sweaters,” which seem to address and focus on the nonconceptual things during his time with Cleo in this unpublished section of *The Book of Transparencies.* This and the aesthetic of transparencies could reveal that Bolzebados is unable to perceive himself any other way than externally.

Overall, the book is a unique work, inclusive of different voices or rather speakers that help describe what Bolzebados was feeling during this time and what his thought processes were throughout the entire narrative. This book is different from other, regular narratives that do not include the narration of different people or irregular breaks between periods, but this only opens the minds of readers to think of different ways to write narratives. Thus, those interested in the study of mental states told through the narrative of one person, narrated by people other than that particular person, would love this book.