

Afterfeast, by Lisa Hiton
Tupelo Press

rev. by Scheradyn Hall

Lisa Hiton is an award winning poet and author with an M.F.A in poetry from Boston University, as well as an M.Ed. in Arts in Education from Harvard University. Along with being the founder and co-director of *Queer Poem-a-day* at the Deerfield Public Library, Hiton is also the Poetry Editor of *The Adroit Journal*. She's had her work published in *LAMBDA Literary*, *The Common*, *Kenyon Review*, *Linebreak*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, as well as many others.

Afterfeast is Hiton's debut poetry book, and "was selected by Mary Jo Bang to win the Dorset Prize at Tupelo Press." The reading is a collection of philosophical, romantic, and emotionally exposing poems that make you think about love and all that comes with it. To quote *Lethargy* from page 17,

*We act
like lovers, (...)
The light
does not break through
the casing, yet I wait
for its violence.
I tell myself I want a lover.
I want a lover.*

These poems question the idea of everything that people have normalized and romanticized about love and relationships. Everything from the sacrifice of love, and what love brings out of a person, to if one can truly understand the entirety of the person that they love, and if what they genuinely love about them is the idea of them, gets brought up in these poems. Along with those topics, the idea of where, if anywhere, are the limits of love, and how the presence of boundaries affect a relationship, can be seen in the poems, as well. *The Space Between Trees*, on page 9, has a quote that states

*VI
There is a myth about love and I read it over
and over. Every night you dispel it
by putting other bodies between us. How
does this end? (...)*

This line stood out to me because the tone of this line is so raw. *How does this end*, is such an exposing line when used in this context. It's the author relinquishing all control that they had to their lover, while saying "the pain of this situation is too deep that I need to prepare myself by knowing how does this end, how will *we* end?" In short, these poems force you to think

about how you view and define love, what you blindly accept in relationships, as well as touches on the possibility of religion's impact on all of the above.

I find this book to be incredibly interesting, and it has truly affected the way I view relationships. My favorite line is from *There Was An Entire Chicken* (pg.31)

I'd be the chicken on the spit.

I'd be long dead and burned.

I'd be daylight.

One cannot escape her sins

only survive them.

In my opinion, this is the most successful line due to its use of vivid diction. Not only can you vividly see what Hiton is saying, but you can vividly feel it, as well. This was one of the few lines that truly stuck with me, and made me reread it several times. The philosophical lens that has been placed over ideas that I've never thought to question was initially scary, but in a very refreshing way, that I learned to appreciate. Although I may have interpreted some of the analogies and metaphors differently than how it was intended, I feel as though I still gained an incredible insight into ideas that I typically accept as is, rather than questioning them for myself. I firmly believe that when getting into this book, you have to go into it with an open mind; you have to be willing to push the beliefs you hold, as well as be willing to test different perspectives of things you may have viewed as untrue. Reading these poems has been a very enlightening experience, and I hope others who get the opportunity to experience it, gain as much from it as I did.