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ADVANCE PRESS RELEASE: Fall 2024

POETRY

# JONES VERY

by Michael D. Snediker

\$18.00 paperback 6 x 9 inches 95 pages

ISBN 978-1-942723-17-2 pub. date 11/2/24

From what do we assemble ourselves, of what fervors is that scene of us comprised? *Jones Very*—named after Ralph Waldo Emerson’s haunted acolyte—is an ecology of oxymel and abacus. The questions it nurses, the visions it tenders, accumulate by way of atmosphere and filigree. And its ensuing micro-scenes (last straw maquette and intimacy salvage) give off what Thoreau might call the bronze light of when the world that lights our own moves in or out of eclipse. If friendship is a way of inventing a still improbable manner of being, the rapport of *Jones Very*—“conducted... from the rumor / of our formerly / transponding selves”—is its pine needle almanac. The tessellating virtue of this enterprise: that we move through it without shorthand, feeling the lavishness of its undertow as our own. “I live there,” *Jones Very* tells us, “in the factory of a feather / wristed voice.” In the seer’s practicum, the romance of its warbled over-time.

Michael D. Snediker is the author of *The New York Editions* (Fordham University Press, winner of the Poets Out Loud prize) and *The Apartment of Tragic Appliances* (punctum books, Lambda finalist for Best Gay Poetry), as well as *Contingent Figure: Chronic Pain & Queer Embodiment* (University of Minnesota Press) and *Queer Optimism: Lyric Personhood & Other Felicitous Persuasions* (University of Minnesota Press). He is the fortunate recipient of multiple residencies at Yaddo, and is presently Professor of American Literature & Poetics at the University of Houston.

## Praise for *Jones Very*

“Integrity is perhaps the word that best captures this remarkable work, and it starts one thinking about that word in relation to poetry: brainy brilliance, intrepid imagination, and startling word choices that instantly feel inevitable. Dignity. Sincerity. Conviction. And invention: each line is a poem in itself—*An onyx finger in a museum of salt takes fire*—while the whole book simultaneously radiates its single, monumental poemhood. An amazing feat of linguistic acrobatics, it’s a book that never stops opening.”

—Cole Swensen, author of *Art in Time*

“Michael D. Snediker bows down to words, their thick ornery meaty succulence, their impossibility, their arcaneness, their status as foundlings and scraps and pillage. In reply, I bow down, with gratitude for Snediker’s skill at siphoning verbal gems into every available vein. Every line is considered, chunky, realized; every syllable carries a charge.”

—Wayne Koestenbaum, author of *Ultramarine*

“Language, hovering above the word, can weave its own suspended, rippling resonance-web, become chimerical in its transmutations. In *Jones Very*, here is a language allowed to play in this interstitial space. We are both in archaicity and poking fun at it, in an alchemy where word’s textural sounds and meanings come apart and slide back together, and always some danger lurking. Held aloft from surety, the language-machinery of this world unfolds itself into otherwise inaccessible dimensions; from this vantage point, Snediker writes ‘the pornography of sun-sets btwn the erasure of allegory & the appearance of birds’ or ‘the work of sharpening / emptiness with a jeweler’s vast.’ Space and time collapse in some diagonal relation to the world through this fracturing lens. There is tenderness and maybe a little cruelty here, birds and beasts and weeds and something heavy with the weight of an abstract prophesy lingering in it, cut through every once and a while with a sharp, decisive clarity, these moments stand out, washed clean as gifts, and shining, so that he can write ‘I want a clover & have just clover to offer.’”

—Cody-Rose Clevidence, author of *Aux Arc Trypt Ich*

“Ebullient, mournful, tentative and ecstatic, Snediker’s radiant poems pulse with a wild tenderness, and speak the cadence of living in the expressive kernel of embrace.”

—Amber Jamilla Musser, author of *Between Shadows and Noise*

An independent publisher of poetry that runs counter to the mainstream, Ornithopter Press has published individual collections by contemporary authors since 2014.

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