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POETRY

LIGHT-UP SWAN

by Tom Snarsky

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All art constantly aspires, Walter Pater claimed, *towards the condition of music*. The poems in Tom Snarsky's first full-length collection *Light-Up Swan* are animated by twin forces: an abiding love of music, and an equal fondness for the ghostly conversation engendered by quotation. With whimsy tempered by obsessive fascination, the author unfolds an open dialogue with a private pantheon of musicians and poets, both living and dead. These spectral encounters are staged on a far-reaching array of settings, from oceans to virtual gamescapes, starry canvases to comedy clubs. The speaker of the poems is by turns assured and uncertain: in one moment explaining a mathematical result from automata theory, and in the next returning to youthful conflicts and preoccupations. *Are we going in circles* is a fair question for this cyclical book that wears its obsessions and anxieties on its sleeve, but *Light-Up Swan* moves towards a helical lift. Like a string of soft lights winding up a swan's neck, these poems are composed of gentle details that welcome readers into a charmingly off-kilter world—once inside, their curiosity will be rewarded by a warm and unusual sensibility that only Tom Snarsky can bring.

Tom Snarsky is a math teacher who writes poems. He is a former Robert Noyce Teaching Fellow at Tufts University and a Senior Fellow at the Knowles Teacher Initiative. He is the author of two books forthcoming from Broken Sleep in 2022: *Speaking Roles*, a collection of poetry interviews, and *Complete Sentences*, a pamphlet of poems about teaching. He is also the author of the chapbook *Threshold*, published in 2018 by Another New Calligraphy. Along with Kristin Garth he is the co-organizer of Performance Anxiety, a monthly online poetry reading series. He teaches at Lightridge High School in Aldie, Virginia and lives in Bluemont with his wife Kristi.

Ornithopter Press is an independent publisher of poetry that runs counter to the mainstream.

Light-Up Swan is available at: www.ornithopterpress.com/books.html