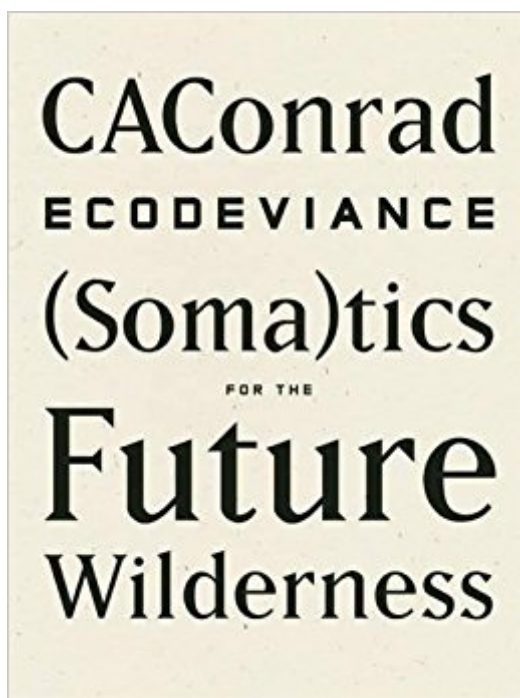


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ECODEVIANCE: (Soma)tics For The Future Wilderness



Synopsis

Listed in The Boston Globe's Best Poetry Books of 2014
Finalist for the Lambda Literary Award in Gay Poetry
Winner of The Believer Poetry Award
"The (Soma)tic Exercises are innovative and crucial to our art form. . . . Conrad must be one of the most original practitioners of poetry forging new territory."
—The Rumpus
"There was a time some of us believed poetry and poets could save the world; CA Conrad never stopped believing it."
—The Huffington Post
From "M.I.A. ESCALATOR":
The ultrasound machine gives the parents the ability to talk to the unborn by their gender, taking the intersexed nine-month conversation away from the child. The opportunities limit us in our new world. Encourage parents to not know, encourage parents to allow anticipation on either end. Escalators are a nice ride, slowly rising and falling, writing while riding, notes for the poem, meeting new people at either end, "Excuse me, EXCUSE ME. . . ." My escalator notes became a poem.
CA Conrad's ECODEVIANCE contains twenty-three new (Soma)tic writing exercises and their resulting poems, in which he pushes his political and ecological efforts even further. These exercises, unorthodox steps in the writing process, work to break the reader and writer out of the quotidian and into a more politically and physically aware present. In performing these rituals, CA Conrad looks through a sharper lens and confirms the necessity of poetry and politics.
CA Conrad is the author of A Beautiful Marsupial Afternoon (Wave Books, 2012) and
— The Book of Frank (Wave Books, 2010/Chax Press, 2009), as well as several other books of poetry and essays.
— A 2014 Lannan Fellow, a 2013 MacDowell Fellow,
— and a 2011 Pew Fellow, he also conducts workshops on (Soma)tic poetry and Ecopoetics.

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Customer Reviews

Again and again, CA Conrad's poetry demonstrates that self-exposure; the braver and more apparently audacious, the better; has the capacity not only to create some of the rawest, most intensely intimate and original poetry being written today, but also to act as a powerful force for overcoming the communicative barriers all around us. Excerpted from the announcement for The Fifth Annual Believer Poetry Award to ECODEVIANCE From these rituals come notes; from those notes come poems; and from those poems comes not just a view into his process, but an entrance into another present, which a reader could as easily follow on her own; across the page as a poem, or across time as a performance of the same ritual. Michael Andor Brodeur, *The Boston Globe* We need this so bad right now: an alternative to all the shoulds, the obligations we take on ourselves to be productive, do more, know more, and care harder so we can fix things; a counter to the stultifying and earnest gloom, self-flagellation, and resignation that is just crushing nature poetry. ECODEVIANCE is a subversive syllabus for a queer ecopoetics, ... exercises, all at once, in magic, telepathy, transgression, confrontation, fantasy, wish-fulfillment, interspecies communications, self-healing, and writing. Charles Legere, *Boston Review* The constant reverberations of collective and individual injury and suffering are openly registered in Conrad's work to memorable effect. Dedicated to his friends, ECODEVIANCE is kept from imploding on itself by love, camaraderie, and determination; a time capsule for the future wilderness and anyone who's being here now. Charity Coleman, *BOMB* These poems are extreme, it's true. There's no way to, there's no reason to, deny this. When Conrad explains that he wants to create an extreme present, he doesn't mean that the present which he creates is one that is extreme by virtue of the fact that he has bloodied his foot or inserted a plastic tube into his penis, it is extreme by virtue of the fact that we have all made it extreme; I blame everyone when I blame / myself I'm that good a shot, he says. Drew Webster, *Colorado Review* Much of Conrad's work directly illuminates his politics, attacking the separation that he believes American culture creates between humans and the natural world. He presents at once a project of radical existential protest, a back-to-nature agenda, and a goal of queer liberation. Publishers Weekly I'm crazy about how this project combines a dead-serious activist mission (connecting with other humans despite and in full acknowledgment of war, violence and environmental degradation) with wacky procedural methods ripe for inspiration. I

love that it lays the whole process and intention bare for all of us to see with a kind of transparency all too rare for poets. . .and yet the resulting poems are still mysterious and wholly unexpected.” Arielle Greenberg, *The American Poetry Review*

The language in Conrad’s poems is surprising in its rawness. While grounded in the specific and the material, the poems touch on Big, Important Issues. The poems themselves, however, stay firmly grounded in this world, in language that actual people use.” H. V. Cramond, *New Pages*

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Michael Andor Brodeur, *The Boston Globe*

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“I blame everyone when I blame / myself I”

That good a shot,” he says.

Drew Webster, *Colorado Review*

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CA Conrad is a lovely madman with a distinctly genius poetic voice. Powerful and accessible, CA and his writing will inspire you to make art and question war.

Amazing read if you like to be inspired to create!

Great condition.

This is absolutely crazy. I would never, ever even consider doing the majority of these prompts. I am using it for a class, but, to me, it was a struggle to get through this book and I don't think I will ever pick it up outside of class, unless I am wanting to laugh at crazy people being crazy.

Whenever I read CA Conrad, whose poems I admire hugely, I end up asking, "Who else is taking these kinds of risks?" I read a lot of poetry. I seem to be one of nine adults left on the planet who still subscribe to and read literary magazines. Most of the poems I read just seem so careful, so eager to flash knowledge and earn credentials. Not bad poems, not bad at all, just semi-dehydrated. Impeccable and careful poems suitable for publishing in a tasteful university press volume entitled, *Poems For Tenure*. Then there's CA Conrad. In

Ecodeviance he describes an exercise wherein he approached men in suits on lunch break in Philadelphia and asked them, "Excuse me sir, on a scale from 1 to 5, 1 being thin and creamy, and 5 being cottage cheese, how do you rate your semen?" Conrad is unafraid to query businessmen, minerals or ghosts; the results are often spectacular. As well as being gorgeous and full of surprises, CA Conrad's poems are marked by a willingness to take real risks and make respectable people uncomfortable. Yes, please! I want to read more poets like that! How can we go on primly celebrating beauty in our rarefied salons and not be pissed off by the poisoning of the natural world and the murder of innocent people? Real love does not shy away from fury. Neither do these poems. The poems in Ecodeviance are the results of rituals created by CA Conrad called (Soma)tics, "ritualized structures where being anything but present was next to impossible." The rituals serve as the source for a body of notes that then become the basis of a poem. Each poem or set of poems in the book is presented with its ritual of origin. (I hereby predict that these rituals will soon be so frequently imitated and assigned in Creative Writing programs that a boomlet of CA Conrad imitations will result. This is not a bad thing. At very least it will provide a respite from Raymond Carver imitations.) In content and delivery, in ritual and result, Ecodeviance is a wake-up call and CA Conrad, our queer genius alarm clock. May we heed the call.

Brave and Unsparing. Just absolutely fantastic.

Beautiful and wild and brave! Do your self a favor and enter this new way of poetry and poetics!

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