



POETS AND POEMS: DAVE MALONE AND "VIEW FROM THE NORTH TEN"

BY GLYNN YOUNG — 6 COMMENTS

Poets and Poems examines the world of the Ozarks through the poetic expression of Dave Malone.

The Missouri Ozarks is a distinct region within the state of Missouri, yet geographically indistinguishable from the Arkansas Ozarks. It presents distinctly different faces, depending upon what one is looking for: the entertainment complex of Branson (and upscale resort at Big Cedar); the natural beauty of the hills, small mountains, rivers and streams; St. Louisans' favorite weekend resorts at Lake of the Ozarks; the rural, backwoods movie setting of "Winter Bone"; the Ozarks of the [Baldknobbers](#) legend and Harold Bell Wright's "[Shepherd of the Hills](#)."

Behind the legends, entertainment extravaganzas, and resorts is the region that tens of thousands call home, where they live, work, get married, raise families and die, much like any other part of the United States. This is a territory of farms and small towns (Springfield, Mo., population 162,000, would likely be the unofficial capital). Away from the glitz of the Branson Strip, it's an area of rugged, stark beauty; I even have two photographs from the region on the walls of my office at work.

This Missouri Ozarks is the home of poet [Dave Malone](#). In *View from the North Ten: Poems After Mark Rothko's No. 15*, he has done the almost inexplicable in comparing the Ozarks to the Mark Rothko painting, an expressionist work of orange-red rectangles on a yellow background.

I say almost inexplicable. As I read the poems I see what he's done, and done well, in using the colors and substance to relate to the physical geography of the Ozarks and the emotional (and physical) geography of relationships. Consider "Rothko's Reds":

*We are joined at the hip bones
like Rothko's reds. Slight spaces
between, like woman-man skin
sticking, unsticking—blotchy fuzz
Rothko wrists into the painting,
No matter how you triangulate the canvas,
you see us. Naked pulsing red mists—
no boundaries on land,
pond, and autumn gold field.*

In one short, nine-line poem, we have the painting, the emotional landscape and the physical landscape.

These are not **ekphrastic** poems (poems about works of art, like "**Ode on a Grecian Urn**" by John Keats). Instead, they are poems that seem to flow almost naturally from the painting. We find poems about specific locations on the farm, about the Missouri River bluff, about barns dotting the countryside, and other physical things in the landscape, almost all of them layered and washed with the personal and emotional.



Rothko No. 15

Gold Light

*Gold light wiggles out
from a space in the red brick.
Winter winds haunt this former church
you live in with your three babies.
Huddled in a bathtub, you push down
infant heads until they disappear inside
homemade quilts. Beside broken pews,
woodstove piping glows like a forest fire.*

The poems of *View from the North Ten* are love poems, inspired by a painting—a painting that serves to evoke what is already there in the geography of the land and the geography of the heart. They also evoke a sense of the sacred and profane, and how the two coexist in the human soul.

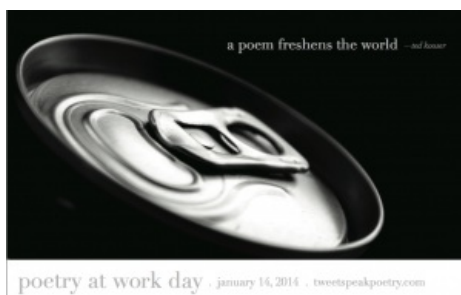
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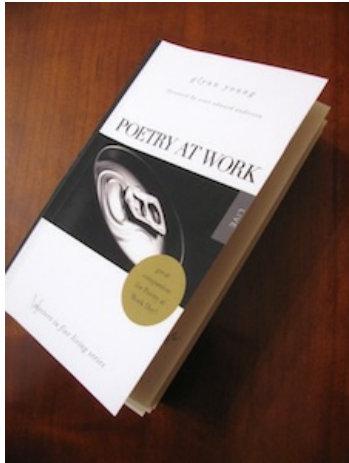
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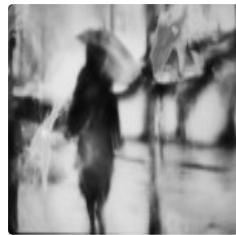


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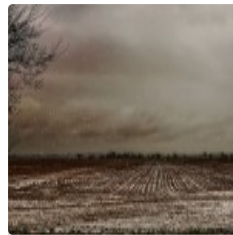
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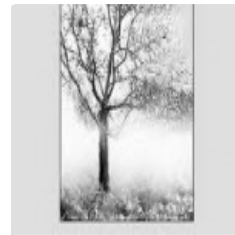
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Dave Malone's "Under
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Maureen Doallas says

DECEMBER 31, 2013 AT 10:17 AM

It was a privilege for me to read Dave's collection before it was published. (He knew how much I like Rothko.)

Good review for a fine collection of poems.

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nance.mdr says

DECEMBER 31, 2013 AT 9:56 PM

i like this.

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Richard Maxson says

JANUARY 4, 2014 AT 9:35 AM

I have ordered this book. The review was excellent, indeed. This April and May my wife and I are staying in Eureka Springs, AR to hopefully find our retirement home somewhere in that area. I especially admire that the poems were fashioned from a Rothko. I spent my first two years of college at the University of St. Thomas in Houston. I spent many afternoons meditating in the Rothko Chapel on campus <http://tinyurl.com/Rothko-17>

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Dave Malone says

JANUARY 6, 2014 AT 2:33 PM

Thanks, Glynn, for such a spot-on, astounding review. I am very touched. Richard, have you been to Eureka Springs before? Neat town and gorgeous country surrounds it. That's really neat—I know of the chapel and can't wait to visit. Appreciate you getting a book!

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Saturday Review of Books: January 4, 2014 | Semicolon says:

February 28, 2014 at 8:02 pm

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Dave Malone's "O: Love Poems from the Ozarks" says:

February 10, 2015 at 5:00 am

[...] had a different picture of life in the Ozarks, and it's thanks to Dave Malone's poetry: View from the North Ten; Under the Sycamore; Seasons of Love; and Poems to Love, and the Body. His latest collection, O: [...]

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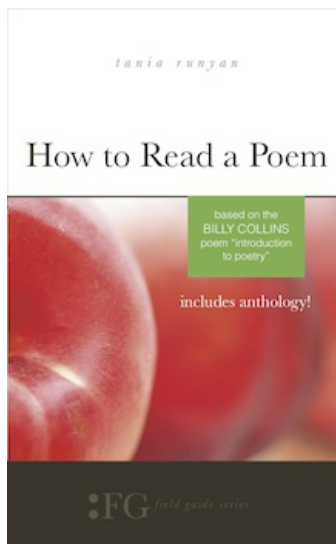
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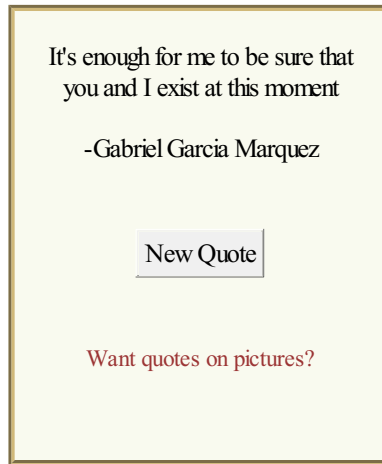
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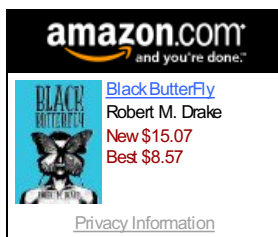
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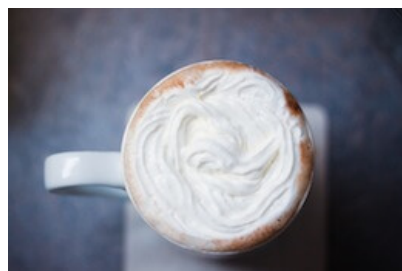
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