

## 'Simply Being'

Roula-Maria Dib

Chiron

This collection of poems is that rare combination of being both profound and accessible. The poet's erudition is not the type that imposes itself on the reader, rather it leads one through the human experience. Literary pyrotechnics are used only where appropriate to illuminate, rather than impress. Firstly, in section one of the book, by ekphrastic exploration in verse, of artwork that has in some way moved the poet, with this vibrant, visceral and sensual interpretation of what the chosen pictures mean for her, a new understanding arrives for us.

In particular I am reminded of T.S. Eliot, the mixture of highly textured imagery and the conversational, or as he would put it "In the room the women come and go, talking of Michelangelo' "Shoe and Tell" is a remarkable poem, the lines "Under the illuminating eye of the Cylops sky/ is a spotlight revealing a scene from a story/ untold - a sequel:" inspired work, from the palate of an assured practitioner of her art.

In the second section of *Simple Being* the poet's heart sings and none more so than in the poem "Hold my hand," tender and full of human love, it is couched in the imagery of the nursery, but framed in the image of the eternal and works well on both levels. "A Poet in Love", also stands out in this section, showing us how messy and how exposed we may become when we love and yet by being who we are and who we were meant to be, we, at some level approach something akin to the divine.

This third section is a rich brew, a tour round the natural, theological, mythical world that we all knowingly or unknowingly inhabit, or take some form of compass bearing from. it's a Jungian for sure, at times meditative, at times whirlwind experience, punctuated by hugely, arresting, imagery as in the opening of "The Prodigal Daughter". "The road back is always sweeter,/like that fig she'll pick right after dawn, with that/ruby-red, metamorphic heart," being just one example.

The fourth section is in part a poet's response to the pandemic and its aftermath what sustains is both physically and metaphysically. Summed up for me in the last line of "Grapes" "Hosting the wedding at Cana,/toasting the boundless, lustrous tresses of the night, which continue to glimmer at Dawn." Referencing the first miracle in the gospels the poet's message is an utterly engrossing one consisting of both reflection and direction urging us forward in *Simply Being*.

Bernard Pearson