



Black Zodiac

By Charles Wright

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In a new anthology of poetry, the author of *Chickamauga* lyrically contemplates the themes of faith, religion, heritage, and morality.

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Black Zodiac By Charles Wright Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

"Time and light are the same thing somewhere behind our backs," Charles Wright supposes in "Meditation on Form and Measure." That's just one line from one poem in this fine collection, but it goes a long way toward capturing the flavor of the project. These poems are investigations into the Big Truths, but they're carried out with a subtle sense of mischief as well as reverence. Poetry refers to the "sheer wisdom" in Wright's work, and Helen Vendler writes that he "never ceases to astonish."

From Library Journal

In the magisterial opening poem, "Apologia Pro Vita Sua," 1983 National Book Award winner Wright claims, "Journal and landscape/ ?Discredited form, discredited subject matter?/ I tried to resuscitate them both, breath and blood,/ making them whole again." It's an apt description of his poetry, which reads like a slightly mad, language-drenched tour of a variety of odd but tantalizingly familiar landscapes (the word comes up constantly): "Midsummer. Irish overcast. Oatmeal-colored sky"; "shank of the afternoon, wan weight-light"; "these few sad stains/ Stuck to the landscape/ December dark"; "Nothing is flat-lit and tabula rasaed in Charlottesville"; and, finally, "Milton paints purple trees. Avery./ And Wolf Kahn too./ I've liked their landscapes." It feels like cheating to write a review that's half quotations, but Wright's luscious jumble of language simply must be experienced first-hand. Along the way he admonishes: "Before you bear witness/ Be sure you have something that calls for a witnessing." These poems bear witness to a rich and contradictory world (told, as it should be, at a slant), and they must be witnessed themselves. Highly recommended.?Barbara Hoffert, "Library Journal"

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From [Booklist](#)

Wright, poet of the Blue Ridge Mountains and displaced child of the Far East, gathers his muses (saints and artists) around him as he ponders the universe and our puzzle-piece place within it. He writes, "It's all about lonesomeness," but the lushness of his lines makes lonesomeness seem sweet, even noble. Wright finds fresh meaning and comfort in all the traditional tropes--never-ending sky, emptying clouds, and the steady, silent decomposition of all that once lived and that will live again--then leaps beyond the organic and observes, "Time and light are the same thing somewhere behind our backs." And later, "Time and light become one somewhere beyond our future." Wright asks if memories are best kept or lost and how we can identify "the determining moments of our lives." He concludes, finally, that for us, the species of the word, "Description's an element, like air or water." And Wright is, without question, wholly in his element in these gleaming pages. *Donna Seaman*

Users Review

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