

Rozentsvit, I. (2022). Book Review: “Seven Seasons: Collected Poems” by Detelina Stoykova-Asenov. *MindConsiliums*, 22(7), 1-6.

*SEVEN SEASONS: COLLECTED POEMS*

by Detelina Stoykova-Asenov

(MindMend Publishing, 2019)

A Book Review by Inna Rozentsvit

*Seven Seasons*, a collection of poems by Detelina Stoykova-Asenov will take you places you have been before, but now find transformed by her keen eye and spontaneous reaction to all she encounters.

A psychoanalyst, writer, and educator, the author will gently pull you into her enchanted realm of the poetic, where her mind wanders freely between nature and human experience, to reveal a world anew, as if washed by the morning ocean at the shore, where she writes most of her poems. Stoykova-Asenov states that the *Seven Seasons*' poems “incorporate” her experience in a world old and new, and we, the readers, are lucky to follow her poetic journey.

The collection is organized in seven sections, corresponding to the name *Seven Seasons* – hinting at the subtlety of the changing seasons, as well as the seasons of life and the seasons of the heart. The chapters are distinguished by their themes, lyricism and architectonics of the poems, varying from Haiku and miniatures to ballads and odes. Each section is accompanied by a drawing by the artist Penko Platikanov (in charcoal and carbon pencil) as well as a couple of drawings by Valentina Asenov, the author's daughter (in pen on paper and digital).

Section I is called REFLECTIONS. One of the poems in this section, “Contemplation,” begins with:

I took some time off  
Of my life  
I needed to go  
I needed to do some soul searching... (p. 3)

and ends with:

my face will emerge  
bright and new  
for a new day  
where I hope  
I can still find you. (p. 5)

In her poem “Reflections,” she writes:

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Where love ends poetry begins  
I’m tired of this story  
Of death and mourning... (p. 6)

and continues:

Where love sparks poetry begins.  
Writing our stories  
With our fleeting meetings... (p. 6)

and ends with an extraordinary demonstration of the power of love:

A stranger said  
I heard you say I love you  
to someone else and I felt loved... (p. 6)

In her poem “Living at the Shore,” the author transforms the ordinary into poetry:

In the morning  
maidens send their beloved  
to sea with the nets,  
in the evening they will return  
with a catch or regrets. (p. 7)

Section I is accompanied by a sensuous drawing of a woman whose lower half is wrapped in a sheet, a reminiscence of an ancient female figure.

## Section II. MINIATURES AND HAIKU FROM THE SHORES

The section opens with the poem “Circle,” where she author unfolds a revelation of the connectedness of all things:

I breathe the earth  
the shore the dunes  
I host the birds  
within myself  
the green waves  
washing on the rocks  
all lay within me... (p. 15)

Another beautiful drawing of a nude woman holding a large jug illustrates the poem – a metaphor of the feminine as the eternal container of life.

In the miniature poem “Meeting,” we feel the author’s pantheistic togetherness with the ocean:

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I came to the Ocean today  
And the Ocean  
came to me... (p. 18)

In “At the Jetty,” the author reimagines the stones of the jetty into something magical, again suggesting the connectedness of live and inanimate objects in one poetic space:

the jetty is my friend  
who offers me a throne to sit  
and share the horizon  
with the sea gulls... (p. 19)

In the poetic world of Stoykova-Asenov all the objects seem to be breathing and interconnected, and her relationship with them is of reverence and admiration.

Section III, TO MY LOVED ONES, is introduced by an absolute declaration of the freedom of love:

If you leave tomorrow  
I will kiss you and tell you:  
‘Good luck...’  
If you return thereafter  
I will kiss you and tell you:  
‘Welcome back...’  
Daniel, my Love, my Life. (p. 29)

In Detelina’s miniature poem “Passion” only a few lines suggest the personified Ocean as the eternal masculine and the Earth as the eternal feminine, as they continuously meet and part at the shore:

I am the sand  
You are the Ocean  
Coming  
I am the cliff  
You are the Ocean  
Waves (p. 31)

A drawing of a nude male in contemplation with one foot on a pedestal illustrates the poem.

In “Dear Bear,” the author reminisces about her love of twenty years ago, who continues to be her love today. The romanticism she finds in her daily encounters makes us long for an enduring and remarkable love such as she has had.

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Back then I looked into your eyes  
And saw the future we are now having  
How was I going to deny –  
I wanted to look into them forever.

And now, don't wish the time to stop  
For I want more of this adventure,  
Some other day ahead I hope,  
We'll find out how love has all the answers. (p. 32)

In “I Am Your Town,” she appreciates the connubial love with her partner, but reminds him that she is not to be his alone:

I am your town  
But it was not built for you,  
I am Your flower  
But was not planted for you

I am here for you  
As you're here for me  
But don't pluck me out  
Others also need me. (p. 38)

In “Monday Song,” she muses allegorically about their loving sexuality:

Don't go away from me  
I will be sad  
I will be sad without your hands...

and

The rivers run dry  
In their beds  
The shores are  
Deserted islands  
When you're not here with me... (p. 39)

The poem “Ten Balloons” to her daughter Vali on her tenth birthday holds all the love a mother has for her child:

Ten Balloons  
Ten sweet tears  
Running down my happy face.... (p. 42)

and all the hopes and anticipation of growing up:

I will open my hand one day  
To let you fly high and away...  
But then and when we are apart

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I will always have one big balloon  
Filled with love and joy for you  
My heart. (p. 42)

#### SECTION IV. NEW ROMANTICS.

In her poem “Love Is...” Detelina reminds us of the all-encompassing thrill and excitement of a new love:

when suddenly you recognize someone’s perfume on your hands;  
when you start saying things you don’t mean...

Also when your brain is empty empty empty  
And it’s only him. (p. 50)

In visceral visions of passion her poems express the longing, pain and impossibilities of sensual love. In her poem “Tango Is,” she illuminates the blooming sexuality and longing stirred by dancing in synch in close embrace, when two move as one:

Desire  
Abandon  
A spell  
Thighs brushing  
Wakening deep in  
The well of the beginnings  
Where desire Is substance... (p. 51)

Her poems on dancing reveal the substance of tango as the so-called “three-minute-romance.”

#### SECTION V. ODES.

The “Ode to an Old Crow” is a wonderful tale sang about the life of an elderly neighbor Alma Smith that our author delighted in knowing:

She roused every morning and went for a ride  
In her little red car that she rode in with pride,  
With her snow-white hair always high in a bun  
She sat in her wicker front chair  
In the afternoon sun... (p. 69)

and finally:

Some time passed, I found out she did go for a ride  
Only this time to that... “other side.”  
  
And all that with a humor so astute and wry  
For a little old lady of ninety-five

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Who had a sign at her door throughout the year  
That read: An Old Crow Lives Here... (p. 70)

#### SECTION VI. DREAMS.

“Dream I” begins with the feeling of being trapped and ends with a touch of facing a reality:

Spacious open loft  
Darkish Space With No Doors  
Solid Dark Wood furniture...

I’m thinking  
Now I’m stuck here...

How will I ever warm this place  
Come winter... (p. 83)

#### SECTION VII. TRANSLATED POEMS.

One of the translated poems, “Gaze Towards the Stars,” was originally written by Detelina’s father, Iliya Stoykov, in Bulgarian, and it is romantic and philosophical verse about the meaning of life:

On the crossroads of the FATE  
I’m flying on the wings of thoughts  
I want to find the end  
From where our beginning starts  
And the beginning where  
LIFE tangles its knots...

and ends with:

With every gaze towards the Stars  
The Earth becomes a little lighter... (p. 97)

In conclusion, the *Seven Seasons* is a grand collection for everyone to enjoy, in which nature, seasons, traveling, and people are all connected in a syncretic whole, a poetic space where dreams and everyday realities are one. The drawings accompanying many of the poems are begging to be carefully cut out and framed, so we will need two copies of this collection, one to read intact, and one to frame...

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