

REVIEW: Laux, Dorianne and Joseph Millar. *Duet*. Durham, NC: Jacar Press, 2016. ISBN: 9780936481166

Duet, co-authored by husband and wife poets Joseph Millar and Dorianne Laux, focuses on music from the poets' (and my) generation. While offering specific personal reflection and memories, these twelve poems also transcend the baby-boomer era to offer some timeless truths.

Some poems pay homage to well-known musicians. "Who Do You Love" thanks Bo Diddley for his ". . . cavernous voice / . . . and the scratchy beat everyone stole," while "Georgia on My Mind" calls Ray Charles the world's "greatest male jazz singer." In "Monk" the iconic musician's work becomes a "geological landscape . . . muffled deep in the earth" suggesting a global interconnection like that represented in Paul Simon's work with Ladysmith Black Mambazo, the subject of the collection's final poem.

Several more light-hearted poems share moments of youthful longing. The speaker of "Cher" wanted to be the "old Cher, / the gangly, imperfect girl," the icon "before they shoved /pillows in her tits." In "Dolly's Breasts" the speaker shares his fixation with Dolly Parton's breasts, calling them "singers," "albino dolphins," and "sisters praying at twilight." While such objectification shocks the reader of the "#MeToo" era, it perfectly captures the fixation of a 1960's teenage boy.

"Mick Jagger (World Tour 2008), presents the much-lauded performer, who like Cher, is not only still standing, but still performing. Never mind that, unlike Cher, he can show a little "tummy pooch" and under-eye "pouches," a "hybrid / of stamina and slouch." Jagger's longevity—like that of the thriving elder boomers—is a mantra and a wish for all of us: "Oh please, don't die, not now, / not ever, not yet."

With two poems about him, Paul Simon functions as the central figure in this collection. "Listening to Paul Simon" portrays a generation who ". . . marched into the streets," a generation who wanted to change the world. The "American horizon" is the scope of this poem, a legacy of restlessness and need captured in Simon's own lyrics "I'm empty and aching and I don't know why" ("America").

"Zulu, Indiana (An Ode to the Internet)," the collection's final poem, returns to Paul Simon, references the only non-American music (that of Joseph Shabalala's Ladysmith Black Mambazo) and then connects back to the US with Elvis and Lil Wayne. The wide-ranging connections are indeed an "ode" to the internet generation.

Paul Simon recorded *Graceland* in South Africa in 1986 when Apartheid was the law of the land. Andrew Zulu lives in Zulu, Indiana, “looks about 12 / and loves Lil Wayne.” Here the power of music transcends culture and geography, both of which are webs of connection. The lesson (delivered in this longest poem) is larger than nostalgia or tribute, both apt and understated: “Whatever we are afraid of, it will change. Whatever / mistakes we make, we will become what we are / because of our blunders.”

-Jeri Theriault