



Sporadic Troubleshooting

Poems

CLARENCE MAJOR

PRAISE FOR CLARENCE MAJOR

“Clarence Major has a remarkable mind and the talent to match.”—**Toni Morrison**

“Major is . . . someone with a vivid sense of how narrative and impulse inhabit the visual realm and who is quite readily capable of carrying them into impeccable language.”

—**Tracy K. Smith**

Deeply felt and brimming with humor and philosophical inquiry, *Sporadic Troubleshooting*, the latest volume from Clarence Major, both acknowledges poetic literary tradition and explores exciting new territories in language. Throughout, Major uses an improvisational technique, applying it to well-known mythological stories to enhance narrative and lyrical intensity. Breathtakingly vivid, these poems are testaments to universal subjects such as love, charity, nature, fear, survival, loyalty, justice, and beauty. Major’s poems offer vigorous inquiries into life and art with a view toward renewal and transformation.

Prize-winning poet, painter, and novelist **CLARENCE MAJOR** is Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of California, Davis. He was a 1999 Bronze Medal National Book Award finalist in poetry, and in 2015 the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation honored him with the Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in the Fine Arts. In 2016, he received the PEN Oakland Lifetime Achievement Award. He is the author of more than thirty volumes of fiction, poetry, and nonfiction.

As a dishwasher
in a restaurant
I lasted only three hours.
It was a dubious role at best.
The dirty dishes kept coming
faster than I could produce clean ones.
But I could play the piano
for hours and hours,
snake across the floor
on my belly
all afternoon into the night.
As Hercules
I lifted Antaeus from the earth,
robbing him of his strength.

—from “Supply and Demand”



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Poetry

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