



WINNER OF THE L. E. PHILLABAUM POETRY AWARD

Looking Up

Poems, 2010–2022

DAVE SMITH

PRAISE FOR DAVE SMITH

“Dave Smith’s poems combine power and heft. The poems take us deeply into the experiences from which they arise, and just as deeply into the minds of the participants.”—Henry Taylor

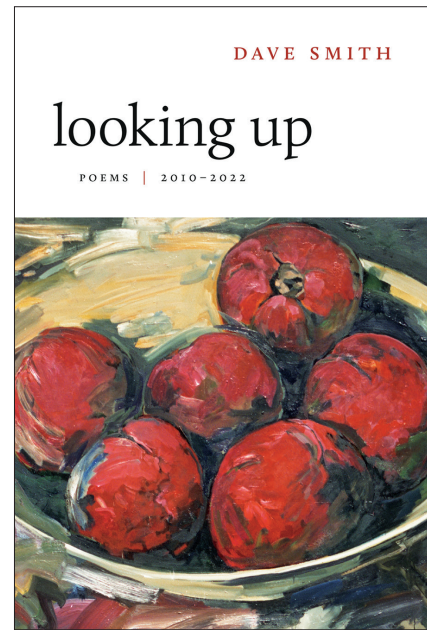
“Over Dave Smith’s distinguished career, the emotionally charged, visceral quality of his poems has somewhat obscured how measured they’ve been, and the fact that he’s one of our most adroit formalists. . . . His is a true language poetry—meaning and sound inextricably fused, pressured into consequence by his disciplined, muscular line.”—Stephen Dunn

Looking Up collects more than a decade of new poems by Dave Smith. These include reflections upon events, animals, and people who prove to have a salutary significance to this poet, now approaching his eightieth year. He ponders the substantial changes wrought by retirement, which brings no expectations, no obligations, no role beyond what one has left, which prompts the question, What will you do now? Both the question and its answers are the subject of *Looking Up*, as Smith gives us poems as acts of attention, raptures, comedies, sardonic narratives, vignettes of grief and joy whose testimony shows that love is surely our core reality.

DAVE SMITH lives with his wife, Deloras, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The author of more than twenty-five books of poetry, fiction, and literary criticism, he has won two National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships in Poetry, a Lyndhurst Fellowship, a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, a Rockefeller Fellowship to Bellagio, and the Virginia Poetry Prize. He retired from Louisiana State University as Boyd Professor of English, then from Johns Hopkins University as Elliott Coleman Professor of Poetry.

I sit inside a wall of hydrangeas, pale heads
jostling against the glass, the thunderstorm
touching the world with its first soft gusts.
The ancients understood what was meant
by the oncoming growl of thunder, steps
hurling down corridors of the gods’ houses.
They’re coming, a brain must have screamed.
So I hunch up as men and women once did,
facing distant dark clouds, words scrambling
like the wrens and finches trying to hold on
where soon rain will knock them to the dirt.

—from “A Personal Baptism”



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Poetry



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