

Drowning With Li Po in a River of Red Wine by A.D. Winans  
Review by Scot Young

Well A.D. Winans can say what he wants about wearing the label of a poet. It is what it is and with his new book *Drowning Like Li Po in a River of Red Wine* from Bottle of Smoke Press, I say he is a poet—all 396 pages, all 40 years of poetry worth spanning 55 plus books and chaps. This is a chronological collection containing poems from every book including an excerpt from *Black Lily* that the *Rusty Truck* published.

This collection begins with *Carmel Clowns* 1970, which I own, and includes the poem *Remember Still* with this opening stanza:

I remember still how wonderful it was  
Running to join each other's dreams  
Sharing our separate worlds of hope  
In rooms of music where angels lay

In the 80's he writes of *Crazy John* and the *Reagan Pslams* and in 1997 he issues a poem *A Call to Poets* when he ends the poem:

take a bookstore owner  
to dinner  
talk child talk  
translate gibberish  
put ego aside  
put power aside  
quit visiting Kerouac's  
and Bukowski's graves  
return to the world  
of the living  
put the poet back into  
poetry  
make me want to believe  
in you again

In the book *From Pussy to Politics* (1999) he remembers his friends Jack and Bob in the poem *I kiss the Feet of Angels*:

Kaufman black messiah  
walking bourbon street  
eating a golden sardine  
Micheline drinking with Kerouac

at the old cedar tavern  
Jesus wiping the perspiration  
from his forehead  
the foghorn plays a symphony  
inside my head  
I hear the drums  
I feel the beat  
I kiss the feet of angels

Winans has said and writes in the intro of this book: I don't think any one man's life is really that important, but what he does with it and leaves behind is.

I agree it is what you leave behind that makes you important. That is why I published his chap Black Lily. It is why I will seek out and buy his early work to read when I am old so that I will still remember.

The work of A.D. Winans is about the common man. This book from BOSP is the definitive history of 40 years of such observations. When you read a 40 year old poem and it is still relevant, you feel the significance of the writer and his work.

A.D. Winans you are a poet. Wear the label however you wish, but I have the documentation, Drowning with Li Po in a River of Red Wine.