

Book Review: *Moonlight in My Eyes*, the poetry of James Richard Hansen

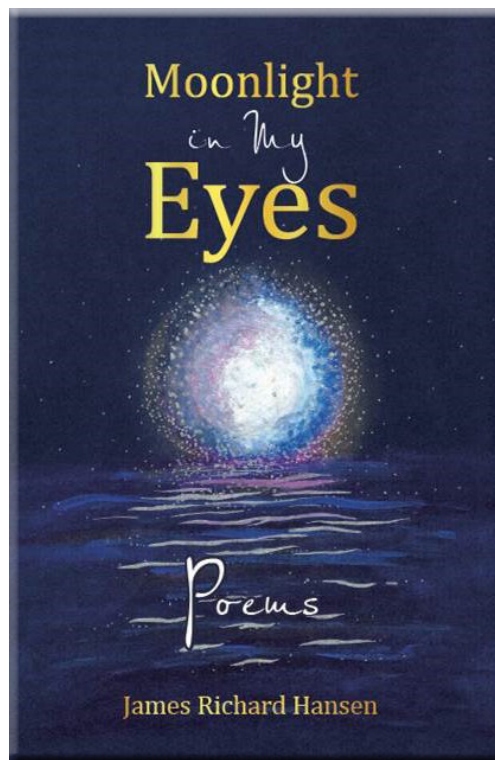
by Kate Jones, DSPE

Moonlight in My Eyes has brightened the year 2023 with poet James Richard Hansen's exquisite descriptions of nature and his part in it. The moon, stars, wind, the sea, and even the sun, paint every nuance of his feelings with the music of words. In 42 poems that capture the magic of the night, of dawns and twilights, we get to share a palette of emotions by one who sees and loves life in all its moods and shades, the dark and the light, and every facet of the spirit.

The book is dedicated "For Kristen" and "For the world." Most of the poems are short, and every word belongs where it is, its choice forming part of a perfect symphony of insights and sensations. And with each rereading, the visitor gains new depths, new vibrations on the strings that the poet's words set into motion. Every line and image awakens sympathetic harmonies, and, like classical music, the clear and simple language elicits the most complex emotional responses. Each poem embraces the mind and its rainbow of passions. Each poem invites repeated readings and reveals new dimensions and surprising discoveries of both the poet's soul and the reader's yearnings. Here is the entire title poem, "Moonlight in My Eyes":

*As I pondered the sky,
with its glowing, silvery sphere
and stardust sprinkled on an ebony carpet,
my eyes opened wide
to allow the full symphony into my soul.
The universe seemed to be mine,
with nothing to stop me
from taking in everything
my mind and senses could absorb.
I luxuriated for an hour.
When my voyage ended, I had within me
an experience of a part of nature
almost completely unknown.
It filled me to overflowing.*

With every poem, the reader senses a new combination of revelations and reactions, moods



and transformations within the poet. Reading the lines evokes changes within the reader's responses, too. Here is a small excerpt from "Fantasy of Wonder":

*As the sunset faded,
the moon captured my heart.
The silver sorcerer sang with the stars
a nocturne of dreams and desires.
The music put me to sleep on the beach
in a fantasy of wonder.*

In addition to the collection of 42 wondrous nature poems, the book gives us 13 love poems written to the poet's wife, Kristen. In "Darkness to Diamonds," he concludes with:

*Your smile imbues my soul with warmth...
In my life of much trouble and pain,
my time with you has been an oasis of love.*

Looking into the heart and mind of a poet of Hansen's sensitivity and giftedness enriches the reader's experience as well. Each sentence

is like a vitamin pill for the mind and for one's emotional comfort.

The poet recognizes comfort as well. These lines appear in "Comforting Stars":

*... The stars are my comfort,
soothing my anxiety
by distracting me from the effects
of the moonlight. ...*

Stars recur in many places, looking like dust at galactic distances that hide their actual enormous size from human eyes. Here is Hansen's treatment of his "Drifting Away" with the stars:

*As the sun set on my day,
the moon rose and relieved me
of my darkness.
Stars spotted the sky.
I gazed at them to get warm
from the beauty.
Soon they took center stage,
while the moon disappeared
behind a small patch of clouds.
When I started getting sleepy,
I lay down on the grass
and drifted away to the stars.*

Readers, too, will find themselves drifting away to new states of mind and mood with every visit to Hansen's pages and the magical light they project. Keep the booklet close by wherever you are. Ω

“Painting is silent poetry, and poetry is painting that speaks.”

—Plutarch