

Glass to Sand, Poems by John Van Dreal

The constructed objects of this collection—angular and crystalline, letting light through—bring a new sense of the world to the page.



Praise for *Glass to Sand*

“*Glass to Sand*—an image of unmaking, of entropy prevailing. The poetry in this collection is haunted by such unmaking, what earlier poets called ‘mutability.’ The speaker in the poems is driven to resist it, even while knowing full well that such resistance is in vain. This speaker is an introspective voyeur. His outward gaze is always also inward, seeking to fathom himself: ‘In the mirror, / still, this stranger.’ By taking the measure of others, he seeks to gauge himself, most explicitly in ‘Juxtaposition of the Deep Townie and Self.’ Not only the speaker, but the poetry itself is best characterized by oxymorons: prose lyric, aural-visual text. It navigates edges, especially emotional ones. It is consistently intense, even in ennui. It allows itself abstraction but creates vivid images, paints portraits and vignettes. Its bar scenes engage every sense; its characters—the man trapped in an overly safe life with a Lexus that ‘needs 92,’ the ever-optimistic man whose ‘silver mullet’ is crowned

with a bald patch—linger in mind. Through meticulous evocation of surfaces, most strikingly in ‘Gravel, Sweat, You,’ its intimate interactions reach deep.”—Eleanor Berry, author of *Green November, No Constant Hues,* and *Only So Far*

“John Van Dreal measures the illusive and essential details of everyday life, then weaves them into rhythmic verse. In *Glass to Sand*, Van Dreal captures the deepest dimensions of human relationship; ‘they find each other in a silence that contains the familiar...’ ‘they find each other in those sparse moments between planting and pruning.’ More often than not, Van Dreal is a poet of intimate expression. He notes how a couple ‘speak to each other with side glances and slightly tilted, slightly turned heads.’, then relates the way to ‘navigate the determined roots of a white oak clawing their way through a sidewalk.’ His poetry is a poetry based on reexamining the world.”—Thomas Mitchell, author of *Where We Arrive* and *Caribou*

“Compelling and remarkably honest, *Glass to Sand* investigates the sharper edges of our unique emotional landscapes in a series of exciting, accessible poems that explore both the strengths and frailties of the human condition in its varied aspects—fractured relationships, nostalgia for lost family, the ghosts of the past, loneliness, and slowly mending hearts. Weaving together intimate stories filled with hardships and longing, with nature and identity, Van Dreal renders heartbreaking narratives in which characters reach out to be loved and to finally feel understood.”—John Sibley Williams, author of *The Drowning House* and *Scale Model of a Country at Dawn*

About the Author

John Van Dreal earned his formal education in Fine Arts and educational psychology, maintaining careers in both fields and writing in his spare time. He uses writing to explore the darker and quirkier sides of human behavior. His work has appeared in the *Willawaw Journal*, *Black Mountain Press*, *Oberon Poetry Magazine*, and *The Bookends Review*, among others, and was most recently chosen the 2022 runner-up for the Prime Number Magazine Award for Poetry.

Ordering Information

Order *Glass to Sand* from your local bookstore or [Cherry Grove Collections](#), [Amazon](#), or other vendors. \$18.00, softcover, 80 pages, ISBN: 9781625494238