

CLOTHESLINE LOGIC BY RIKKI SANTER. PUDDING HOUSE (COLUMBUS OH), 2009. 35 PP. PBK \$10.00.

Reviewed by Amy Jo Zaak

This group of off-the-beaten-path poems, sometimes experimental in form, often funny or surreal in their content, is so different that I began by saying “Wha-a-!?” After reading them many, many times I began to see how they work.

“In a Station of the Metro,” titled after Ezra Pound’s almost-haiku of the same name, is far from the original. It develops what Pound omits and stretches vertically two pages as if whatever was on Pound’s “wet, black bough” (the final line of his poem) is running down like rain on a windowpane to end at

end
of
line.

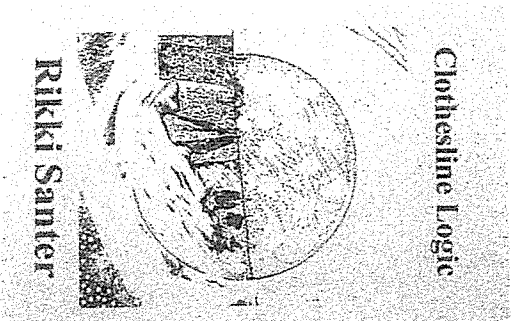
One of the typical non sequitur poems is “Literary Movement: an Answer Key with ten odd answers.” “2. The knife and fork of starlings usually volunteer” and “9. Roger’s conch,” are Santer’s answers to questions that are not stated, allowing the reader to fill in the blanks.

“Lunch with My Analyst” is only a little bit more matter-of-fact.

Give me just a taste
of your paranoia ...

those steaming piles of *pieterschitzel*
... a knife point glistening midair ...

scorpions climbing your skin, canaries cursing
in Latin.



By contrast, “Mourning Sickness” sets out the idea of a son arriving “fifteen years” too late to be with his father before death; the reason:

son now the father

his should have been.

This is a not uncommon but melancholy tale of misunderstanding between generations. These vignettes are only the edges of what people actually experience, willingly or not, in real life.

The collection has perhaps more negative than positive moods, but it also has insight and whimsy enough to lighten the mix. For those who want to write in less traditional ways, this book could be a model.

Rikki Santer has worked as a journalist, a magazine and book editor, co-founder and managing editor of an alternative city newspaper in Cleveland, and her all-time favorite job – bagel street vendor. She earned a M.A. in journalism from Kent State and an M.F.A. in creative writing from Ohio State. Santer currently lives in Columbus where she teaches literature, writing, and film studies.

