

## POETRY

Conners, Peter. *Of Whiskey & Winter: Prose Poems*. White Pine, dist. by Consortium. 2007. c.88p. ISBN 978-1-893996-89-2. pap. \$15. POETRY

"The spiders of December spin frost webs across the windows." Conners crafts a selection of prose poems that celebrate seasons of beginnings, survival, forgiveness, and the dailiness of an ordinary life. Yet there is nothing ordinary about these often ironic and witty poems. Especially strong are those that consider the interminable winters of Rochester, NY. In one, Conners juxtaposes shoveling snow with the act of writing: "My fingers pzotest this plot we have shoveled out for ourselves." His fingers work slowly, "lugubriously." "They curl and glower at me from their home row perch." Conners, who has written extensively about the prose poem, deftly uses language to create layers of meaning in his own. In "Certified Alive," the narrator seems to pass his worrisome physical exam, but all isn't necessarily well: "It will take/ till spring to spell the names of my discontent" and "If I am too late, only [the postman's] shadow will appear." Conners's language is gritty and visceral. Readers

will feel cold seep through blown-open windows and smell spring earthworms churning debris. And yet, "The/ seasons hold us tight: the storms have betrayed our trust but they/ must be forgiven." Highly recommended for contemporary poetry collections.—**Karla Huston, Appleton Art Ctr., WI**

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