



Unopened

Doug Hoekstra

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"Unopened," an intriguing volume of previously published and unpublished poetry, is Doug Hoekstra's latest and third book. Among its fifty-seven selections, the reader will find poems that rhyme, poems that don't, prose poems, sedokas, and yes, even an obligatory sonnet. Some are personal; some are societal. Some look inward, some look outward. Throughout the reader is invited to connect and reflect. "Unopened" is divided into three selections to allow the works to cross-pollinate and the reader to choose his or her adventure -- "On the Page" (themes close to home), "Off the Canvas" (out in to the world), and "Between the Notes" (the space between, the indefinable). Hoekstra's introduction sets the tone for this journey, but the reader sets the course. "Unopened" also features Hoekstra's his original artwork on the front and back covers, taken from a series of collages created to reflect the content of the book. As he says in the afterword, the art and prose both reveal themselves "as a collection of fragments-memory, imagination, anticipation-broken, reassembled, and made whole." Taken as that entity, "Unopened" is a worthy addition to Hoekstra's body of work, living somewhere between the "five-minute worlds" of his songwriting canon and the short and long fiction of his prose writing. "Hoekstra writes in a style that could safely be called eclectic, but that doesn't do his either his music or his literary genius true justice. He is like a quirky art collector, putting together odd bits and ends, and then making them into something with an effect so much more than the mere sum of their collective oddities." (Midwest Book Review)

Unopened Details

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Author : Doug Hoekstra

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From Reader Review Unopened for online ebook

Marissa DeCuir says

I loved this collection. Specifically, I was moved by Hoekstra's kindness toward the reader: he organizes the collection into three distinct sections, (On the Page, Off the Canvas, and Between the Notes) which made me feel as though he truly valued my interaction with his words, and wanted to help me journey through them.

JKS Communications says

Hoekstra's third work further cements his identity as an artist of many talents. I enjoyed Unopened because of the sheer versatility of Hoekstra's poetry style, which he showed as he moved from traditional forms to contemporary ones, and from the internal to the universal. Additionally, I was impressed by the cover art: Hoekstra's vibrant work as well.

Lucas Eytchison says

I tore through this book quickly (by my standards, anyways.) I loved Hoekstra's variety of poem form, mixing contemporary and traditional poem styles in this work.

Tom Schulte says

Back in 1999, when I began with the whole Internet radio thing with collegemusic.com there was a period where interviews only happened in chat (all typing, no audio), or with the lo-fi quality of a telephone microphone suction cup pickup. It was during this time I came across compelling songwriter Doug Hoekstra and his album Make Me Believe (One Man Clapping Records OMC 0018, 1999) with its memorable opener "Sam Cooke Sang The Gospel". Hoping to get some recollection or saved artifact from this, possibly, very first interview on my show for my book, I reached out to Doug. While no 1999 traces emerged, such is the font of talent and creativity from Doug that I found instead an opportunity to enjoy his latest collection of poetry: Unopened (Five-Minute Books, 2019).

The title piece begins recalling his father and artfully dodges into a forgotten, left behind, unopened vinyl LP. "Vinyl" from a concluding section in this triptych also explores the magic of those spinning time capsules. That final set of poems explores the mysteries of interactions after groups of pieces on the personal and greater worlds. Broadly, there is little form here in the sense of rhyme and meter in these prose pieces while there is an intriguing similarity to a style of rigid form: the haiku. Know you the typical characteristic of the haiku, that there is a division somewhere in the tiny poem, so that the focus on the first, obvious thing, switches to another exposing a subtle relationship between the two in a that is insightful and sometimes surprising? These pieces tend to end that way, drawing me from first line to the last.

Kathryn Notestine says

This book immediately caught my eye with it's awesome front cover; then I found out that the author created the collage himself-- so cool!

I loved that the pieces inside each made me approach family, relationships, or work, or society with new appreciation, perspective, and new insight.

I'd sum it up as quick poetry for deep thinkers.

Jessica says

I received this book for free from JKS Communications in exchange for an honest review.

This was interesting poetry collection. It's different than the type of poetry I usually read (I usually read more of the Instagram poet type), but I still enjoyed it. I liked that, unlike a lot of Instagram poems, some the poems were longer (more than a page long). I like it when poems are a bit longer because it allows you to go more in-depth. There was a good mix of both short and longer poems.

I liked how the book was divided into three sections. All the poems fit well into the section they were in and I could tell the themes (family, nature, music, etc.) of each section without it being overly obvious. It was subtle which is sometimes very hard to do.

Additionally, I loved the story behind the cover. It added a really nice personal touch.

My one critique is that the book should have been longer. I would have loved to seen at least 20 more poems to really make it more impactful and feel more complete. I felt like I got a small taste of his poetry, but I wanted more.

Overall, this was an enjoyable and unique poetry collection.

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