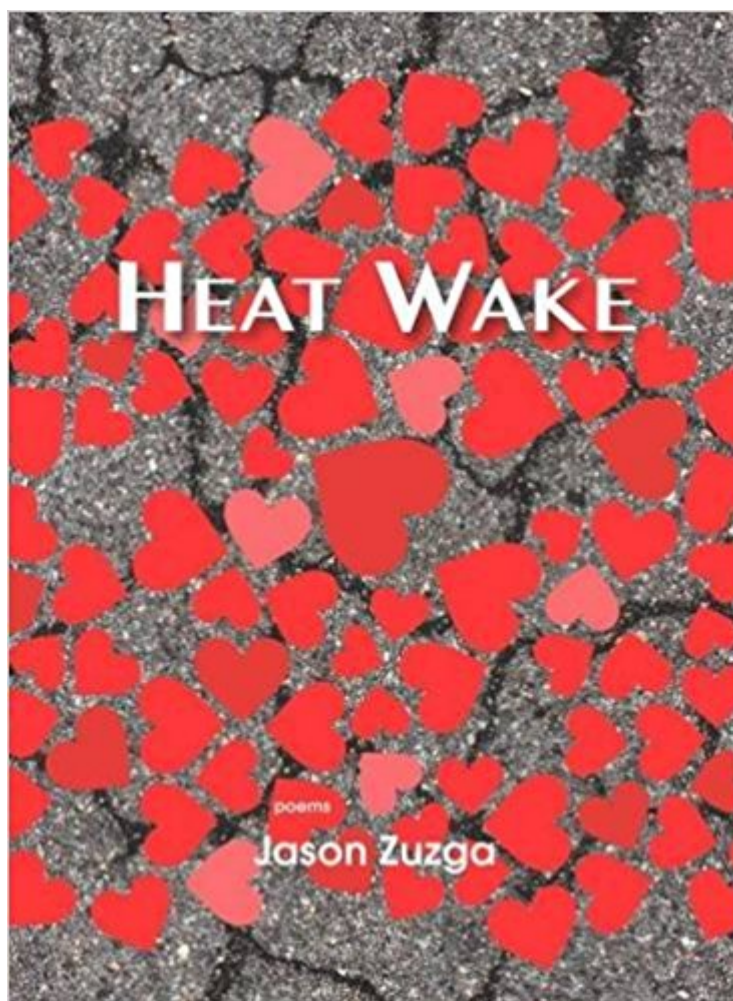


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# Heat Wake



## Synopsis

Mixing science with humor, humanity, whimsy, and love, Jason Zuzga's debut collection is a revelation

## Book Information

Paperback: 96 pages

Publisher: Saturnalia (March 15, 2016)

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## Customer Reviews

Zuzga's debut collection grows out of the intersection of myth and nature, like a simmering volcano of animal intensity that occasionally erupts in expressions that alternate between euphoria and lament. He establishes this strange amalgam from the opening lines of the first poem:

"All rocks are queer. By this I mean/ I'm gay. In Love

Poem, Zuzga recalls a melancholic youth in the dark shadow of an emerging queer identity

("I was angry at myself for being a teenaged mermaid") and tinges of this same

sadness appear at other moments in the collection. "I may have exceeded the number of

allowable/ falls-in-love," he sighs. Animals appear everywhere, including bats, sharks,

"hot deer," and an extinct Steller's Sea Cow that munches "on sea

lettuce the color/ of absinthe." Zuzga also meditates on the distinctions between human and nonhuman animal as scientists observe an array of marine life. In the title poem, he gets futuristic,

imagining the cyborg "not-yet elephants of Mars." The book's third section

(of six), "Electric Clocks Don't Tick," revolves around Zuzga's

suburban New Jersey childhood and features Aunt Dottie's "sun tea,"

adventures with Encyclopedia Brown, and a surprisingly tender bathroom inventory. These gentle

touches bloom all the more brightly under Zuzga's zoological bell jar, placing a real human

heartbeat in the menagerie. (Mar.)\n

"Zuzga's debut collection...erupts in expressions that alternate between euphoria and lament. He establishes this strange amalgam from the opening lines of the first poem: "All rocks are queer. By this I mean/ I mean gay." In "Love Poem," Zuzga recalls a melancholic youth in the dark shadow of an emerging queer identity ("I was angry at myself for being a teenaged mermaid")...In the title poem, he gets futuristic, imagining the cyborg "not-yet elephants of Mars." Publishers Weekly "The loss of the father, the complexities of time and love—traditional lyric concerns woven together with iconic images from pop culture create a world deeply felt and wonderfully habitable...It is appropriate that the opening poem is titled "Elegy," and no, it isn't ironic that it is a love poem, for it, like the others in the book, is an example of a heat wake, of the warmth of life that gets left behind. The best we can do is love it all as it passes from us." Christopher Nelson, Under a Warm Green Linden "Heat Wake" is everything I am excited about in poetry now...Who connects time travel and the sleek bodies of surfers and drive down the coast in such a strange and beautiful way?... I would trade this one poem for a dozen other full collections I have read in the past year...this collection makes you want to write your own poems because it just hums with an infectious vitality...You must have it in your life and on your shelf." Frank Montessonti.com

Beautiful beautiful poetry, celebrating both nature and suburbia. It's a combination of science with everyday sense and experiences that can't be found elsewhere.

These poems!! These poems are like private, personal little odysseys into strange, uncanny landscapes of flora, fauna, rocks and the even more surreal terrain of human emotion. They're odysseys where you move around images of whimsy and fantasy and play. And somewhere among the strange and unfamiliar octopus tentacles or rosemary breezes, you're slowly being coaxed to recognition of.. (what?).. often some deeper feeling is being teased out from you which you won't perceive immediately. Because often these poems provoke some feeling that you don't notice until you've left them, or, in many cases, a feeling that hits you like a heart-thud at the end. Because no matter how exaggerated or surreal or even banal the places Zuzga takes you, still there is that human stuff always lurking underneath. Some sadness, some loss, some humor, some love, some familiar, ambiguous landscapes that reside only in that place of Memory. Read these poems to go to those unfamiliar/familiar places.

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