



Tea

D.A. Powell

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Visually arresting, Tea is an experimental poem-cycle with traditional formal techniques built into its wild surface.

Tea Details

Date : Published February 1st 1998 by Wesleyan University Press

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Author : D.A. Powell

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From Reader Review Tea for online ebook

Kenji says

Really experimental but worth every little page, word, space.

Tiffany says

A beautiful book filled with beautiful poems.

Julene says

I just finished Tea from the library, I definitely want my own copy. I love his intro, how he says this is not an AIDS book. Good for him to differentiate. I love the concept of tea and it's use by the gay community. I remember Tea Dances when I lived in NY and would go for the occasional weekend to Fire Island. The Tea Dances on Sunday afternoons were bitter sweet because the weekend was nearly over.

This book is an amazing weave of culture. It is rich in literary and myth references, in fact he has a long list of notes at the back of the book that give reference to many of the more arcane ones. He sites music from Donna Summers, Sylvester and other disco divas. There is an amazing tale of life in his fragmented snippets. Some of his full poems take my breath away, some singular lines stun me. And between that at times bafflement, but in a good way.

His poetry is probably not for everyone, it is not linear or narrative, but as he says in his intro, "I began Tea as a chronicle of a relationship. Having not written for a year following the relationship's terminus, I was compelled to begin writing again, and I took my failed relationship as subject. Because I was unable to contain the first lines I wrote, I turned my notebook sideways, pushing into what would traditionally be the margins of the page. These lines, with their peculiar leaps and awkward silences, became the strangely apt, vessel into which I could pour my thoughts. I took fragments and made new statements from them. just as I wished to reshape my life from its incomplete bits." He goes on and I love his intro. Fascinated with how poets conceptualize their work, I consider him a genus. This is definitely a view into gay culture in the time of AIDS by a schooled poet, not a book about AIDS.

Zach says

I particularly appreciated the nifty index in the back as a way of clarifying the gay inner circle/disco/comic book jargon peppered throughout. Also, the book looks great. Reads pretty well too.

Luis Correa says

I've never felt dirtier and giddier at the same time. Really barreled through this focused yet playful book.

Janet says

DA Powell is one of the most remarkable contemporary poets. Another poet, Rachel Zucker, told me to read this--absolutely superb. Poets always know who's good. Strong and tender and dead on, each line is a poem in itself. Evidently, he wrote it longways on legal paper to examine the tensile strength of the line, how long it could go before it crashed and burned. The arrival of a star.

Darrell says

This collection is not as experimental as some people suggested to me. Yes, it's experimental in the sense of some techniques like the spaced out line lengths, but the core of the collection deals with real human strife and emotion...sometimes, and there are sometimes the collection has humor and references which breaks away from the serious.

A really good collection I recommend to anyone.

Kristin says

Favorite pieces: most every poem in "Tea Dance"; "[she was not expecting another gentleman caller. a golden male had already been brought forth]"; "[the last dog of this boyishness is put to sleep. feckless fluffy pet: I am not saved fella]"

Elizabeth says

I enjoyed this very much.... and I was blown away by some of the poems. Plus, it's the right size. To have a book with a fragmented, emotional core -- for me, I can only sustain engagement with such a rendering for a while. Powell's portraits of love, lust, the impact of AIDS on the queer community are passionate and unflinching.

Andrew says

I loved this book when I first ran across it years ago at the Berkeley Main Library. I loved the Robert Hass blurb on the back. Nice stuff.

Robby says

Christine says

Came back to this book again after having read some of it before. The intro is great, too; this passage blew me away:

"As memory required me to revisit the deaths of many of these men, I realized that I ran the danger of writing a collection in which death was a consequence of my "lifestyle." (I use quotes here, because I do not really understand the difference between a life and a lifestyle, aside from the fingerpointing. I am nevertheless happy to be accused of style.) Some who read or do not read this book will hold that opinion. But the truth was--is--that my life is a consequence of those deaths. My relationship with Scott was in part a failure of our understanding of the times. Our fear of knowing our own HIV status was one of the powerful forces that held us together and drove us apart: we saw each other alternately as the possibility of salvation and as the possible instrument of destruction. Because of this, we simultaneously loved and hated each other with a kind of emotional violence."

James says

I think this book shows Powell establishing his style. It's really good, but not as powerful as the later two in the series.
