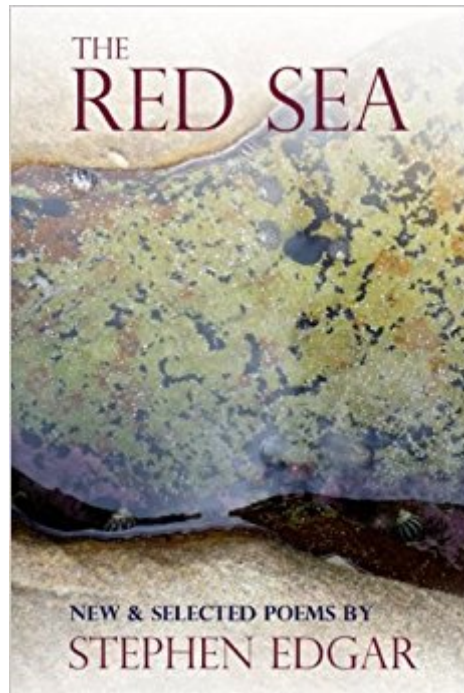




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The Red Sea



Synopsis

Clive James says of Edgar's poetry, "Here is the poetry of someone who has been granted all the gifts, including a sense of proportion so concentrated that it sings." James was so taken with the poetry that he flew to Australia to meet and talk with him. Despite such acclaim, Edgar's work is not widely known because, heretofore, he has been published only in Australia, his home. Baskerville Publishers is pleased to initiate the correction of this deficit. (Please note that that we have chosen to retain Australian usages.) These poems cohere because they are rich in physical and historical fact, their scaffolding is as of steel, and their music rises from a lyricism precise and generous. A craftsman, yes. New classicist, yes. This is magisterial poetry.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In an effort to make up for what I felt to be an inadequate grounding in poetry, for about the last three years I have been reading a book of poetry every month or so. I have discovered a couple poets who speak to me, but none to compare with the paragons of my relative youth, especially T. S. Eliot and Philip Larkin. But after some of the poems in THE RED SEA settle into my subconscious over the next decade (if I am accorded that privilege), Stephen Edgar just might stand with Eliot and Larkin in my personal pantheon. I can already say that of living poets I am familiar with, he is my favorite. There are forty-nine poems in THE RED SEA. Fifteen are denoted as "new", and the remainder as "selected". Astonishingly, there was not a single poem in the volume to which I was wholly indifferent. My usual practice when reading poetry is to mark those poems that I believe would be rewarding when re-read at some indefinite time in the future. I started doing that with THE RED SEA, but a third of the way into it I decided that when I again open the book I should read it in

its entirety, not just the "most special" ones. The subjects are diverse. For example, scenic expanses or vistas, most of them involving water and/or a colorful sky; the natural world; ontology; quantum physics; the Velasquez painting "Las Meinas"; atrocities (such as the lynching of Rubin Stacy); lost love; the past -- and specific moments from the past, caught in amber. What I most admire about Edgar's poetry is its formality. Even without regard to content, Edgar is the most accomplished and dexterous contemporary poet I know. Most of the poems employ rhyme, usually with graceful subtlety rather than with jarring pyrotechnics.

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