

Carousel Quarterly
LOUIS MCKEE - Editor

There is nothing wrong with fear. And dealing with the beast isn't anything new to poetry. Still, it is usually careful and calculated steps that are taken. Not here; the following are the opening lines of "Paranoia:" "Think of something soft/wool/lambswool/angel- hair/you know if you inhale/these things will kill ..."

Here is a book by a witty, intelligent and deeply-gifted writer. It is a poetry of experience, of movement, and most of all, it is honest. Wallenstein has taken to writing about real things with a perceptive and accurate language. It is city-talk, and city-life seems to move around him. This is "Rapist:" "There is terror too in the boy who steps outside. /His every move is a risk. /Outside, even his pause is dangerous./He takes a single step and we are cold/The terror we know, the sadness we feel/dissolves against the accuracy of outside movements." It wouldn't take you long to feel this book from the inside.

BOA EDITIONS

This first published volume shows Wallenstein to be a finely disciplined versifier. The poems are tightly controlled and skillfully honed to six or seven syllabics (sometimes more or less) to the line. In the typical poem there are up to a couple or dozen lines or no more than 100 words all told. Wallenstein therefore fits into the company of Reg Saner, David McKain, and most notably Linda Pastan among his contemporaries. His diction, which is resolutely simple and straightforward, is given a sudden twist by unexpectedly elusive phrases or shifts in tone, manifesting clearly the poet's edgy, even neurotic response to experience. The world around him is vaguely threatening; what little love there is gives no comfort or assurance. In sum, the context of the poems is recognizably contemporary and urban. A promising first volume, recommended for collections or present-day poets.