



A Field Guide to the Heavens (Wisconsin Poetry Series)

Frank X. Gaspar

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In Frank Gaspar's beautiful and exacting book, *A Field Guide to the Heavens*, is a compassed and sculptured map that leads to what is purely human. There aren't any abstract angels here, only the breath of quest and raw life—from the symbolic gecko to the mythic Apostle Paul and Caesar. This collection is highly democratic and spiritual, where George Herbert is only a few pages away from Allen Ginsberg. Gaspar's material is composed of the stuff we are made of: an approximation of the old, need-driven songs of the spirit and flesh shaped out of imagination and autobiography -Yusef Komunyakaa "This poet is a good storyteller. He knows what will interest you, and he doesn't present himself as transcendental. . . . I like the way he talks about a dozen things in one poem" -Robert Bly "Frank Gaspar has arrived, in this book, at an adult voice of startling presence and power, a voice at once humble and confident, doubting and authoritative. . . . he returns us to poetry's perennial, inexhaustible power: the old verities of the self's engagement with love and time, with meaning and chaos, are shaped here into something alive, something generous, selfless, and new" -Mark Doty Frank X. Gaspar's collection of poems is haunted by the presence of mystics and visionaries: Mohammed, Buddha, St. Paul, Augustine, George Herbert, Emily Dickinson, Blake, Milton, Rilke. *A Field Guide to the Heavens* is punctuated with designs of science, the wondering and rapt observations of the sky made at the eyepiece of a backyard telescope. We come to know Gaspar's city streets, the neighbors and strangers that walk them, the wreckage of past lives, the ocean, the gardens, the orchards and alleys and parking lots, all spread out under the vast sky.

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