



BOOK RELEASE

Poetry / biography
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Imperfect Penance Mitchell Parry

A Dark Fugue, Drunk and Shivering

Imperfect Penance is a hybrid work that weaves together fact and fiction, poetry and prose, in a biographical collection of poetry based on the life and work of the Austrian poet Georg Trakl (1887-1914).

This poignant portrait of Georg Trakl explores passion, obsession, addiction, vision, and despair at the beginning of the twentieth century. Trakl had an erotic obsession with his sister; was addicted to chloroform, opium, and veronal; witnessed the bodies of partisans hanging in trees; and attempted suicide. He died at twenty-seven, leaving behind an important legacy of poems.

Using Trakl as a lens, Parry explores a drastic and strangely distorted moment that was foundational for the twentieth century. This is the world of Freud, Wittgenstein, Rilke, Klimpt, Kakoschka, Loos, Kandinsky, and Klee; a world of German expressionism; and, of course, the transition from the romanticism of Brahms and Mahler to the rigour of Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern. Trakl's tragic life was emblematic of German and Austrian societies of the time, when deeply conservative cultures were forced through the crucible of modernism.

Haunted by Trakl's ghost, Parry's collection plunges readers into this sordid and dangerous world, exposing a great poet remembered for his remarkable gift of language. In his identification with Trakl, Parry flirts brilliantly with darkness and extremity, creating a collection that is both chilling and glorious.

MITCHELL PARRY was born in Etobicoke, ON, and spent part of his childhood in Manchester, England. He obtained a Masters of Arts from the University of Western Ontario in English Literature and Film Studies. He has been an English as a Second Language teacher and an arts administrator and has worked in film production in Calgary and Montreal.

Parry is a frequent contributor to *The Malahat Review* and has written many reviews and articles. His own poems have appeared in literary journals such as *The Fiddlehead*, *The Antigonish Review*, *Pottersfield Portfolio*, and *Event*. He won *The Antigonish Review's* Great Blue Heron Poetry Contest in 2002 and *Pottersfield Portfolio's* Sixth Annual Compact Poetry Competition in 2001.

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Mitchell Parry's first book *Tacoma Narrows* was a finalist for the City of Victoria Butler Book Prize in 2006 and a finalist for the Gerald Lampert Memorial Award in 2007. He currently divides his time between Victoria, where he teaches film studies at the University of Victoria, and Pender Island, where he lives with his partner, poet Marlene Cookshaw.

ACCOLADES

"Mitch Perry's imaginative, sometimes hallucinogenic, response to Georg Trakl's hothouse family and his intimate life and times is a gut-wrenching read. *Imperfect Penance* takes us through a journey of incestuous desire, drug addiction, war, and suicide. What to say about poems drenched in the 'green dreams' of chloroform? Harrowing yes, but fascinating, too. Darkly brilliant." — Patricia Young

About Goose Lane Editions

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