



Glaciology (Crab Orchard Series in Poetry)

Jeffrey Skinner

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“Once I walked a thin rail through a glacier” begins “Shattered Bio,” the first poem in *Glaciology*, Jeffrey Skinner’s latest collection of poetry. Filled with images that slide into one another in a dreamlike way, from the “squeak of pine trees in a forest” to “pinwheel, the baby’s hand,” the poem provides a precise way of seeing how layers of tenderness and danger melt into one another, inhabiting the same world.

At the center of the book, the eighteen-part title poem “Glaciology” takes readers to the core of misunderstandings as it juxtaposes the work of a glaciologist with fractured language, misread cues, and a literalness that defies conventional explanation. The lives of the glaciers are reported with a careful, scientific language that keeps readers emotionally at bay from the effects of their demise, and the speaker comments, “I consider language / mistreated these days, asked to explain itself / to justify at the same time it bears / meaning, to own up / to creation at the moment of use / only, and only *that* meaning.”

The third section of the book further explores the tensions of life and death in ways both whimsical—by focusing on a fly, a vintage clock, rabbits, and Poland, among other subjects—and deeply serious. In the long poem “Event Horizon,” Skinner takes readers into an accident and its aftermath, which brushes too close to death. By the end of the book, however, a new focus comes into view with the birth of a grandchild in “All Things Move toward Disorder Except the Newly Created.”

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