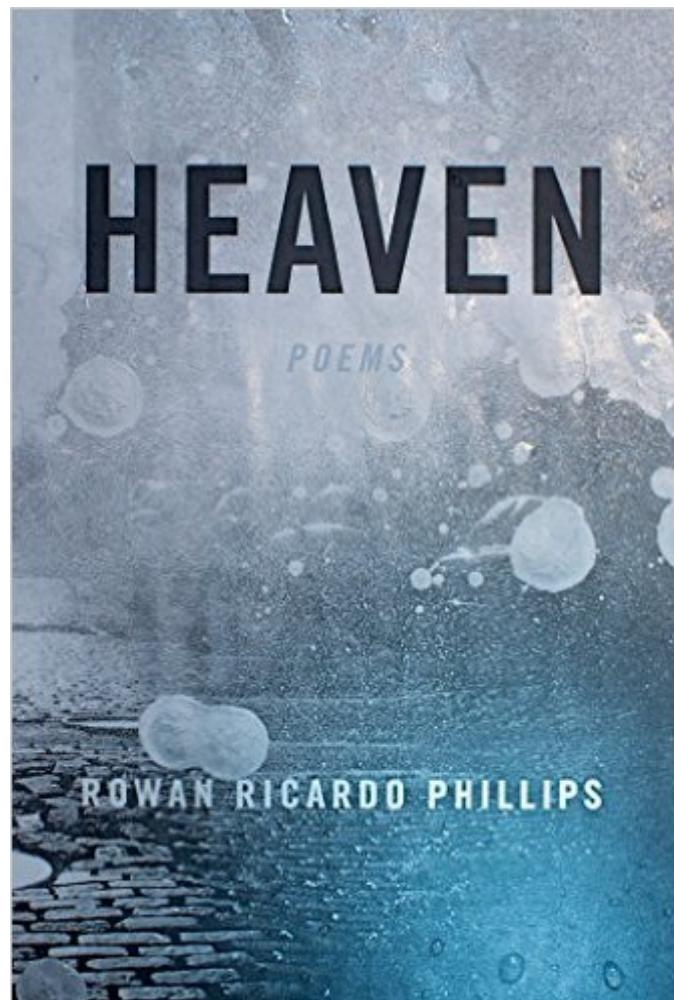


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Heaven: Poems



Synopsis

One of The Washington Post's Best Poetry Collections of 2015One of NPR's Best Books of 2015One of Flavorwire's Best Poetry Books of 2015Long-listed for the National Book Award in poetryLong-listed for the 2016 PEN Open Book Award"Who the hell's heaven is this?" Rowan Ricardo Phillips offers many answers, and none at all, in *Heaven*, the piercing and revelatory encore to his award-winning debut, *The Ground*. Swerving elegantly from humor to heartbreak, from Colorado to Florida, from Dante's *Paradise* to Homer's *Iliad*, from knowledge to ignorance to awe, Phillips turns his gaze upward and outward, probing and upending notions of the beyond. "Feeling, real feeling / with all its faulty / Architecture, is / Beyond a god's touch"•but it does not elude Phillips. Meditating on feverish boyhood, on two paintings by Chuck Close, on Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, on a dead rooster by the side of the road in Ohio, on an elk grazing outside his window, his language remains eternally intoxicating, full of play, pathos, and surprise. "The end," he writes, "like / All I've ever told you, is uncertain." Or, elsewhere: "The only way then to know a truth / Is to squint in its direction and poke." Phillips•who received a 2013 Whiting Writers' Award as well as the PEN/Joyce Osterweil Award•may not be certain, but as he squints and pokes in the direction of truth, his power of perception and elegance of expression create a place where beauty and truth come together and drift apart like a planet orbiting its star. The result is a book whose lush and wounding beauty will leave its mark on readers long after they've turned the last page.

Book Information

Paperback: 80 pages

Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Giroux (April 19, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0374536228

ISBN-13: 978-0374536220

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.2 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (4 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #179,455 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #80 inÂ Books > Literature & Fiction > African American > Poetry #729 inÂ Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Regional & Cultural > United States #28394 inÂ Books > Literature & Fiction > United States

Customer Reviews

Heaven is a collection of poems that satisfy on many levels. Phillips writes with authority, tightly

controlling his meter while letting powerful metaphors drive his poems forward--I enjoyed almost all of the poems in this collection, which I read for a class about Imagery and Metaphor with poet Julie Sheehan. Very well worth the money, and I hope to see more of Phillips' musings.

Phillips dances in and out of the western tradition; into and away from form; and he circles constantly back to the material ache for divinity and transformation that is a condition of the flesh. His authority is in his light touch-- and if, from time to time, his self-evident intellect or taste for virtuosity stiffens a poem into artifact, major pieces like 'Beatitudes of Malibu' ground these explorations always in the aching, seeking self.

New young poet. worth reading.

As a professor, Phillips lacks soul, so it's impossible for me to take anything he does seriously. He's a careerist, not a poet. Whitman would vomit if he had to listen to this guy.

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