

The Danger in Everything is an outstanding effort for a first full-length collection. While there are the occasional inconsistencies expected from a young and passionate poet, there is every reason to expect Jeff Walt to make a significant contribution to the poetry of our time.



Buried Land.

Jim Clark.

Eternal Delight Productions, 2003.

\$15.99 (compact disc).

Reviewed by Cy Dillon

Jim Clark has a well-deserved regional reputation as a poet, essayist, and teacher. *Buried Land* proves that his abilities as a musician are also remarkable, but beyond that, the beautifully produced compact disc is an ambitious attempt to connect the poet's use of language, image, and meter with a deep and nearly lost tradition. Clark is a competent reader of his spare and beautifully crafted poems, and his interpretation of traditional music in the Old Time style is even better. In "Dark Hollow" and "Sweet Sunny South," for instance, he maintains the dignity of the original tempo of Old Time as well as anyone I have heard, and after over two decades as a volunteer at the Blue Ridge Institute I have heard many. These two songs and the booklet of poem texts neatly stowed in the package are the best features of this effort. On the other hand, "Barbara Allen" and one or two other songs suffer from just a bit too much emphasis on the English ballad sound. There he almost crosses the line into sentimental nostalgia, but even then Clark's versatility and mastery as a musician come through clearly as he plays everything from harmonica to dulcimer.

Of course, nostalgia is the beast that must be battled whenever Southern writers—and musicians—address heritage. Clark wins this battle in the music, in the photographs on the cover, and especially in the poems. He is neither an innocent nor a Nashville wannabe. As he says in "Return":

I have been gone a long time
but not far
even so there are changes
and I am beginning to understand
the ways of pilgrims
and what is written
in light
behind their eyes.



Piece Logic.

Erica Hunt.

Carolina Wren Press, 2003.

26 pages, \$14.95 (paperback).

Reviewed by Dr. Keith B. Mitchell

In her recent collection of poems, *Piece Logic*, African American poet/activist Erica Hunt continues to explore issues of poverty, exploitation, environmental degradation and its link to the vicissitudes of American capitalism. Hunt's title and subject clearly point in two important directions: through her poetry Hunt exposes piecemeal political and social agendas in the United States that the majority of American citizens have been convinced are logical. In addition, her collection of poems offers an oppositional poetics that attempts to illustrate the logic of peace that is sorely missing from contemporary America's socio-political landscape.

The first poem, "A House of Broken Things," echoes Abraham Lincoln's words, "A house divided cannot stand." Hunt's poem elaborates further by pronouncing that not only is the (American) house divided, but it is also broken. The poem's speaker laments that we live in a country whose "logic" in selecting who deserves to pursue and to obtain the American Dream and who does not is fatally flawed, noting that in America, "a foreigner is welcome as long as s/he is generic. Or naturally naturalized and numbered." In short, to be an American today one needs to be assembly-line generic like the mass-produced consumer goods the United States effectuates. "House" speaks to our government's discriminatory immigration policies in which race, ethnicity, and nationality determine who is allowed within America's borders and who is not. A case in point is the policies regarding the West Indies. When seeking political asylum in America, Haitian immigrants, "coping in an open boat. Skirting the remote," are usually repatriated while (light-skinned) Cubans are generally welcomed into the country.

"Object Authority" expands upon tropes found in "A House of Broken Things." The speaker critiques American capitalism that "promises to ban objects offensive to good sense. Promises by the row what no money can buy, belonging." Even history has been commoditized and made generic: "History [is] not only written by the victors but revised and trade-marked by them and their revision happily bought up by the re-conquered as regurgitated shrink wrapped kente clothe toaster ovens, adhesive backed ikat on temperature control waffle irons." As long as money is to be made, America shamelessly mass-produces cultural artifacts as readily as it does other