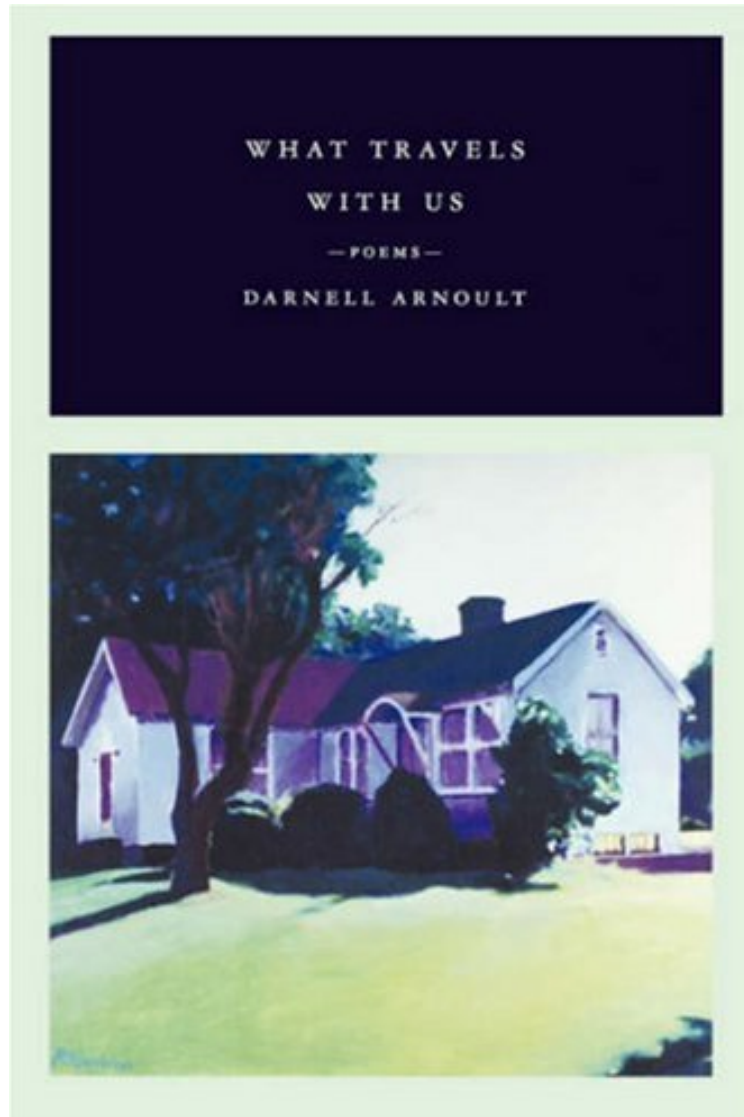


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What Travels With Us: Poems

Darnell Arnoult

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Darnell Arnoult : What Travels With Us: Poems before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised What Travels With Us: Poems:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Marvelous stories from yesteryearBy G. BurchDarnell has a way of capturing and telling a story with intrigue - giving just enough to set your imagination to work, but not giving away too much of the story so that some of the mystery is left up to you, the reader to interpret and enjoy. I grew up in this town and I knew many of these people - she has nailed them. The busy-bodies, the unspoken lives once lived and then left behind, the dreams and passions given way to everyday life in a mill town. It's all there and these stories are

marvelous and refreshing. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Slightly Uneven Poetry but Wonderful Storytelling
By David Ross
While I think that Arnoult's poetic voice is somewhat weaker than her wonderful prose in *Sufficient Grace: A Novel* the storytelling in these poems is still striking such that it stays with me months after reading it. My favorite is "Learning Strategy at English Field" which describes Arnoult and her ex-mother in law watching Arnoult's son play baseball with Arnoult returning in her memory to her own time as a "rising senior" watching her future husband play baseball at the same field. Several other poems are similarly evocative including these lines from *Angels*: "And I'm not ready to be a grandma. What's going to happen to us? I'm just thirty-five you know." From a woman falling in love with her 15 year old daughter's child.

With a storyteller's timing and the emotional range of a singer, Darnell Arnoult in her debut collection offers readers a stirring string of poems about the people of Fieldale, Virginia. A planned community founded in the Virginia foothills by Marshall Fields in the early 1900s to support his textile mill, Fieldale was populated by transplanted Appalachian mountain folk. Arnoult herself grew up there, a third-generation resident and among the first generation to go to college. She took away with her the oral history of her home, and in *What Travels With Us* she captures in poetic form the townspeople's voices, both remembered and imagined. Personal, poignant, and witty, Arnoult's poems look back as they move forward, demonstrating how we are always creating ourselves anew from the experiences we carry with us. Pearly Rakes complained that on long winter nights Gracie and Charlie kept the parlor lamp burning too long, burning up her kerosene. Pearly claimed she courted and married the same man twice and never burned up nearly so much. Charlie scratched his head. Told Pearly, You musta done most of your courting in the dark. -- from "Boarding House"

From *Booklist* Edgar Lee Masters would be proud. In the unfortunately (and unfathomably) unfashionable style of *Spoon River Anthology*, Arnoult's moving collection presents a whole village full of people, brought to three-dimensional life in spare, conversational poems. There's Autho, dancing like a sleek young man even when his hair is white. And the unnamed factory-worker woman who loves her laborer husband but, well, what with the work and all, "one of us is always asleep / before the love comes." And another unnamed woman, only 35 and "not ready to be a grandma," falling in love with the angelic child of her 15-year-old daughter. These are simple stories--the kind still found anywhere in rural America--of the working poor and the sorrowing dispossessed, captured in all their vivid dignity by a poet of great compassion and eloquence. Patricia Monaghan
Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Arnoult opens a window on a world and land and lives now mostly gone, and lets the forgotten, the inarticulate, and the dead speak for themselves, which means they also speak for us, as well as to us." About the Author Darnell Arnoult is the author of the novel *Sufficient Grace*. Her poems and short fiction have appeared in *Southwest*, *Southern Cultures*, *Southern Exposure*, *Asheville Poetry*, and *Nantahala*, among other journals. She lives with her husband on a small farm outside Nashville, Tennessee, and teaches creative writing throughout the Southeast.