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On Looking: Essays

By Lia Purpura

Sarabande Books. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Paperback. 224 pages. Purpura is the real deal, and so is every successive sentence in this collection. A cornucopian vocabulary is married to a strict economy of expression; an offbeat curiosity is married to the courage of difficult witnessing. . . . Albert Goldbarth Purpura's prose is a system of delicate shacksleaps and connections and syncopated revelations, all in the service of the spirit negotiating the truth of its experience. Sven Birkerts Lia Purpura's daring new book of lyric essays, *On Looking*, is concerned with the aesthetics and ethics of seeing. In these elegantly wrought meditations, patterns and meanings emerge from confusion, the commonplace grows strange and complex, beauty reveals its flaws, and even the most repulsive object turns gorgeous. Purpura's hand is clearly guided by poetry and behaves unpredictably, weaving together, in one lit instance, sugar eggs, binoculars, and Emerson's words: I like the silent church before the sermon begins. In *Autopsy Report*, Purpura takes an intimate look at the ruin of our bodies after death, examining the dripping fruits of organs and the spine in its wet, red earth. A similar reverence is held for the alien jellyfish in *On Form*, where...



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