



Effort at Speech: New and Selected Poems

By WILLIAM MEREDITH

Triquarterly April 1997, 1997. Paper Back. Book Condition: New. William Meredith has character. In a time when what passes for poems are often slickly-packaged, trumped-up ads for the self -- for the poet's various victimhoods and petty grievances -- Meredith's poetry returns us to poetry's sustaining, self-dissolving source: praise. Meredith's poems are tenderly and accurately rendered love-letters to a world he loves. Yet he is too humble, too respectful of people and nature, to lay claim to his subjects. Instead, he affords everything and everyone a sense of privacy, easing gently toward his subjects, admiring all their dimensions, recording the small beauties along the way -- all the while both praising and maintaining their mysteries. Meredith offers us a world unencumbered by the transient, self-serving designs of the ego. He is like the friend who, by his modest and affirming presence, makes you feel smarter and more attractive than you are. "The cheer, reader my friend, is in the words here, somewhere," he writes. As with all his lines, it's a beautiful understatement.

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