

**THE
SANDPIPER'S
SPELL**

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SPELL



poems

Tom Pearson

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Acknowledgments

Some of the poems and stanzas in this edition have been previously published in *Poetry Quarterly*, *Haiku Journal*, and other periodicals.

Many of the ideas herein are connected to my work in the performing arts, with poems such as *High Chaparral* and *Vanishing Point* containing some of the written inspirations of my early theatrical endeavors. Other poems, like *Story Lodge*, *Childhood*, and *Circus World* pick up threads of personal experience which move between past and present, colliding events and memory against a shifting topography.

Gratitude to Elizabeth Carena, Andrea Lepcio, Marilyn Morris, James Pearson, Carolyn Rhodes, and Jennifer Trice for their editorial suggestions, and to J.T. Garrett for his teachings in the medicine way.

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Tom Pearson
New York

a los que saben

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*There are some things you learn best in calm,
and some in storm.*

— Willa Cather

THE SANDPIPER'S SPELL

Invocation

dreams and illusions
currencies of the old world
now closed for repairs

The Sandpiper's Spell

Part 1

the marauders of dawn
veer along shore
where a waning tide has left
a crescent of cooler sand

the hard pan makes
for swift advance
and the trail discernible
a band now drunk
on its own velocity

appetite propels them onward
to the facing beaches
where the Atlantic
gathers at the corners
of Salt Run

waters of the Ancient City
Anastasia and the inlet
mingle with the River of Blood

Matanzas

on nor'easterly winds
winter's tempest has washed ashore
tragedy with treasure

and lovers lost

while mating in moonlight

ambushed

buffeted about

shells cracked

the soft sweet meat

of a midnight feast

carnage left strewn across a sand pile

a half claw or back leg of ghost crab

picked apart by early risers

I shadow trident footprints

chasing the dawn over dunes

stalking sideways-listing foam chasers

our silence overtaken by the

uproar of seagulls

a sphere of white down

and a daybreak of fluff

the realm of night crawlers

foreclosed

bleached now by daylight

under the assault

of wind

and flight

and trumpets

I dream of kumquats
the sky overcast
with meringue
throws shadows on silk

Glow

in a hand-held mirror
the space cowboy
finds an angel's face

his narrow waist
a cactus squeezed for water
parched in dry season

he stilt-walks the night
a net high in the heavens
catching star splinters

bleaching his bones
in sky light

sanitizing leftover dreams

the rough sound of
metal scrubbers
scouring porcelain prayers

About the Author

Tom Pearson is an artist working in written media and performance. He is best known for his original works for theater, including the long-running immersive theater hits *Then She Fell* and *The Grand Paradise*, and as a founder and co-artistic director of the New York City-based performance company Third Rail Projects. He is also the director of the Global Performance Studio, an international program for cultural listening and exchange.

Pearson's work draws from depth psychology, archetypal studies, and deep dream practices as well as the story-medicine and ceremony of his native Tsalagi (Eastern Band Cherokee) heritage. He holds a master's degree from New York University in Performance Studies, and he has received two New York Dance and Performance (Bessie) Awards for choreography, a Kingsbury Award for writing from Florida State University, and a Visual and Expressive Arts/IllumiNation Award from the Ford Foundation and the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian for his work in Native Theater.

Pearson was recently named among the 100 most influential people in Brooklyn culture by *Brooklyn Magazine* and awarded an artist residency in Saint Petersburg, Russia through CEC Artslink.

The Sandpiper's Spell is his first book.