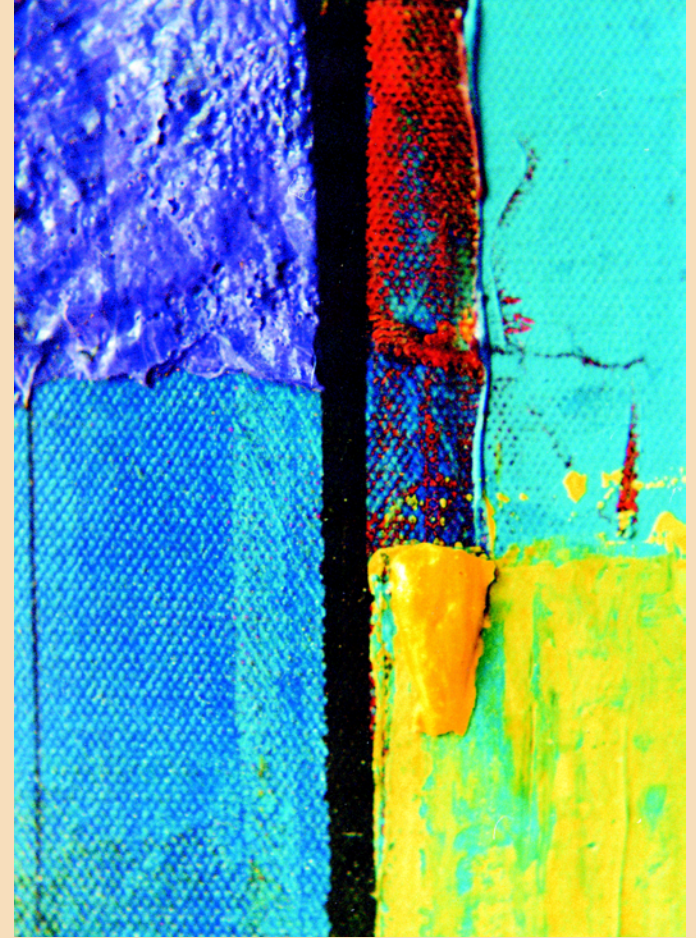


# A small Asymmetry

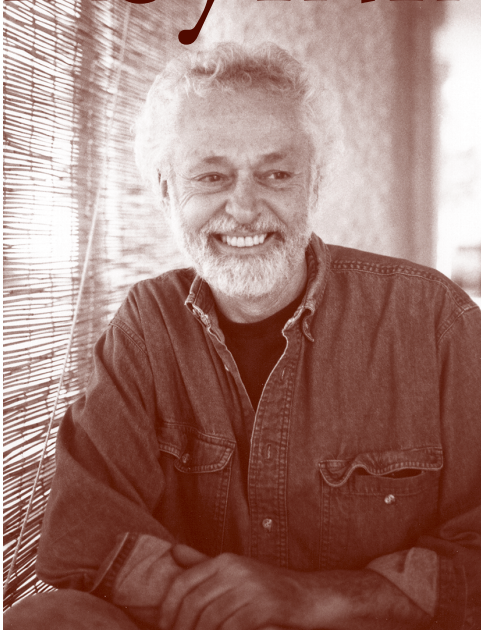
# A small Asymmetry

John Donoghue



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John Donoghue



is the author of the poetry collection *Precipice* (Four Way Books, 2000), and his poems have appeared in *Agni*, *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *The Lancet*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, and other journals. He received his MFA from the Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College.

A native of New York City, he holds a BS and MS in electrical engineering from Northeastern University, and a Ph.D. in engineering from Case Institute of Technology (now Case Western Reserve University). After working for several years in industry as a Senior Control Engineer for the Industrial Nucleonics Corporation (now ABB), he joined the faculty of the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department at Cleveland State University where he presently teaches in the areas of control systems and digital signal processing.

“

Imagine Marianne Moore's scientific eye, Robert Lowell's turbulent heart, and Billy Collins' sleight-of-hand and you begin to glimpse the altogether agreeable chimera that is John Donoghue. The poems in *A Small Asymmetry* take the familiar surfaces of the world and probe them, rumple them, shake them out, reminding you, as the best poems do, of just how much you fail to see. In poems like "Neighbor," and "Sheila's Auras," and the splendid "Solstice," Donoghue's restless intelligence and imagination are drawn equally to the silly and the sad, to the broken and the whole, to the beauty and absurdity of trying to make sense of things – ourselves in particular.

” —George Bilgere

*A Small Asymmetry*  
by John Donoghue

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FROM  
PHYSICAL

...And he's right, it *is* balance we're after,  
not symmetry, not that static, sentimental same-old same-old  
across a boundary, one side unable to give  
or teach anything to the other, our deep dislike of symmetry  
the reason we marry opposites, not clones, the reason one foot  
is always larger than the other, one heart, one lopsided stomach,  
the reason first there's *A*, then *B*, the reason one-fourth of my walnut –  
from 12 to 3 – struck out on its own and bulged  
into asymmetry. So... OK... I'll go. It *is* nothing.

I'll put on my Ray-Ban Cats, rub on my #20 Bain de Soleil.  
I'll put on my aqua Speedo trunks and my black Rockport thongs.  
I'll put on my Spiegel rugby shirt, and my Yankees baseball hat.  
I'll carry my red aluminum beach chair and reed mat  
under my left arm, and my all-cotton towel and rainbow umbrella  
under my right. I'll carry my cooler bag and my book bag  
over opposite shoulders, and carefully, it being just myself,  
I'll walk my newly strange asymmetric body – feeling now  
like a threat – down to the sea.

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