



Floating City: Poems (Walt Whitman Award of the Academy of American Poets)

Anne Pierson Wiese

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"This remarkable book is proof that a light hand is the most masterful. Anne Pierson Wiese's poems read so easily and pleurably that one hardly realizes one has been confidently moved to a slightly different dimension, a world resembling ours but better observed, and quieter—in the best sense. . . . This is completely accomplished poetry of a very brave kind, daring to be immodestly good—modestly."—Kay Ryan, from her judge's citation
Anne Pierson Wiese's first collection of poems illuminates the everyday and the lessons to be learned amid life's routines. The poems in *Floating City* might be called poetry of place. Many are set in New York City, but they simultaneously inhabit a realm in which a mundane physical location or daily exchange can be seen to have human significance beyond the immediate. When one dismisses from one's mind the idea that going to the park, doing the laundry, buying a sandwich, and riding the subway are familiar experiences, one makes room for the actual to ally with the hypothetical by means of the emotions. The result, Wiese eloquently shows, is a form of truth that is silently generated whenever human beings earnestly endeavor to absorb the world.

The century plant's flowered spear appears only once, twenty feet tall, shortly before its death. Given the proper conditions, all plants bloom on schedule. We are less sure of ourselves, the conditions we make for presenting what's inside us to the world less specific; we are haunted by unplantlike doubts about the worth of what we have to offer. The Botanic Garden had advertised the event. I don't remember how old I was, maybe ten. There was a onceinalifetime line in the conservatory, a familiar smell of growth and decay, the choice to look or look away.

"The Century Plant" published in *Floating City* by Anne Pierson Wiese Copyright © 2007 by Anne Pierson Wiese. All rights reserved.

AUTHOR BIO: Anne Pierson Wiese was born in Minneapolis and raised in Brooklyn. She was the recipient of the 2004 "Discovery"/The Nation Poetry Prize and a 2005 New York Foundation for the Arts Poetry Fellowship. Her poems have appeared in numerous publications, including *The Nation*, *Southwest Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Raritan*, *Carolina Quarterly*, and others. She currently resides with her husband in New York City.

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