

Points For A Compass Rose - Evan Connell

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We have here on the planet with us a man of such courage and strength of spirit that he has not lost what Alfred Adler calls the nerve for excellence. He has kept it despite the burden of an awareness not only of the enormity of his project and of the limitations of his own human understanding, but also of the abject ignorance and indifference of his audience...Somehow Connell makes you care. Many modern poets demand a good deal of work; Connell excites it. Sometimes the note-takers [narrator] tone is hectoring, even belligerent; if you have any competitive spirit at all, you seize a threadany threadfollow it, and lo, it traces a pattern you understand at last that these notes are not tentative explorations, and far less are they expression: they are instead the magnificent artifices of a giant intellect...These poems are masterpieces. You could bend a lifetime of energy to their study, and have lived well. The fabric of their meaning is seamless, inexhaustible their language is steely and bladelike; from both of its surfaces flickering lights gleam. Each page sheds insight on every other page; understanding snaps back and forth, tacking like a sloop up the long fjord of mystery.

Annie Dillard, Harper

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