

## ABSTRACT

I write poems in an attempt to shed new light on common experiences, or to view aspects of the world through a different lens. My intention is for the poems in this collection to vivify both the beauties and horrors of our human existence.

The poems in this collection range a wide variety of subjects, from live oaks to grandfathers to the Egyptian desert. I have arranged the poems in four sections, one of which is a sequence of poems based on my experiences in Egypt. The other sections follow an internal logic, but do not focus on a particular theme. Some of the themes which run through the collection are: my family history; childhood and adulthood; love, relationships and sexuality; death and its impact on the living; the dark underside of life; the relationship between self and place; the possibilities and limitations of language as a means of communication; movement and stillness; nature; and spirituality.

Most of these poems are autobiographical, to the extent that they reflect and address my personal experiences. However, there are also a number of poems which are not autobiographical, but which present my interpretation of someone else's experience – either a historical or fictional character or a member of my family. In either case, my ultimate goal is for the poems to reach my readers in the deepest way possible.

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The thermal significance of coloration was investigated in two species of Sonoran Desert tenebrionid beetles. Body temperatures and heat flux of a black beetle (*Eleodes armata*) and a beetle with white elytra (*Cryptoglossa verrucosa*) were compared in a wind tunnel in the laboratory. The effects of visible radiation, infrared radiation, conduction, convection, beetle color, and substratum color on body temperature were analyzed. Results showed that body color has no overall effect on body temperature. Black elytra are warmed more by visible radiation, but color is not relevant to heat loss by convection, or to heat flux between a beetle and a heated sand substratum whether by emitted radiation or reflected visible radiation. *C. verrucosa* absorbs more heat by conduction and free convection from a heated substratum but differences in shape between the two species may explain this effect. When temperature differences occur between black and white beetles in the field, these differences are generally less than 3.5 °C. These differences are small when compared with the range of body temperatures experienced by active beetles in the field. It is concluded that coloration does not have adaptive value in terms of the thermal biology of these desert beetles.