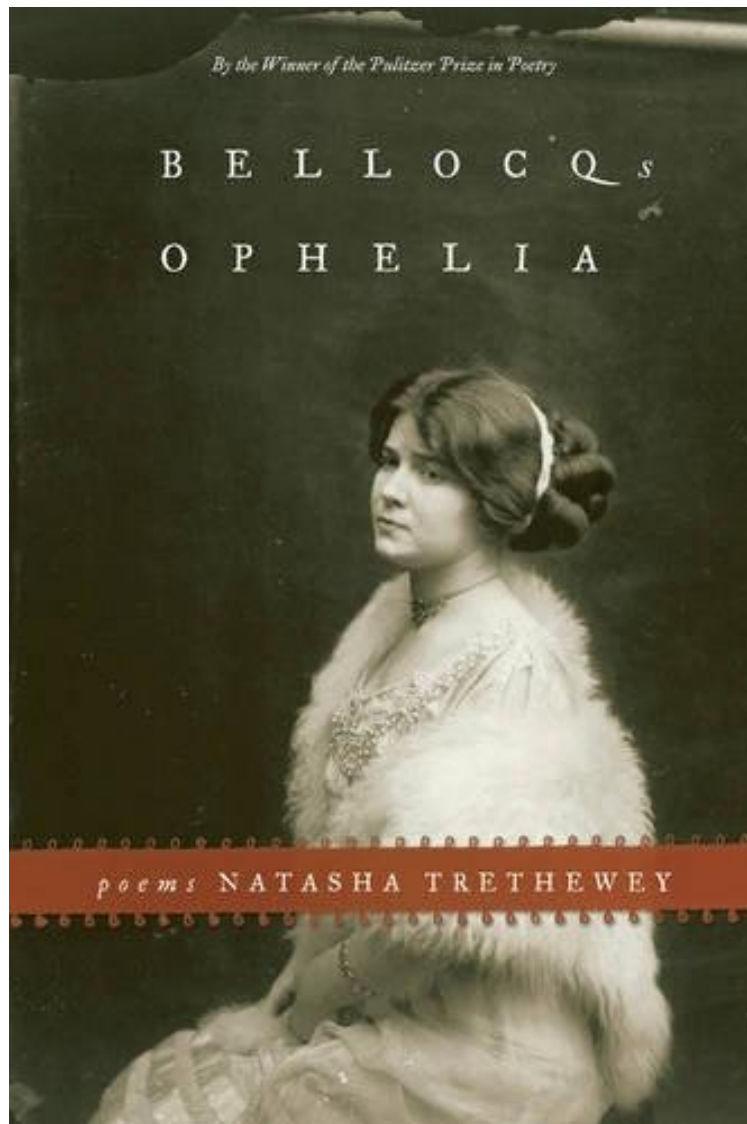


(Ebook pdf) Bellocq's Ophelia: Poems

Bellocq's Ophelia: Poems

Natasha Trethewey

*ePub | *DOC | audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#617679 in Books 2002-04-01 2002-04-01Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 226.82 x .20 x 6.551, .22 #File Name: 155597359048 pages | File size: 63.Mb

Natasha Trethewey : Bellocq's Ophelia: Poems before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Bellocq's Ophelia: Poems:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Brief but Beautiful Book of PoemsBy G. MessersmithAs has already been stated this book of poems is based off of photographs of light skinned African American women working as prostitutes in New Orleans around 1912. These photographs were taken by a man named Bellocq. Each poem connects to the same woman, Ophelia, and tells a story. Although each poem could stand alone they read beautifully together.

Trethewey makes us ask what we can really get from a photograph. Can we know a person from pictures of them? Or is it a false front always put forward in a photo? Whatever conclusion you come to you will want to read and re-read this brief book of poems over and over again. The narrative voice Trethewey uses is first person through a series of letters. These are so beautiful and moving I simply cannot express it here in this review. Below is a sample of what I'm talking about: At last we are nearbreaking the season, shedding our coats, the gray husk of winter. Each tree trembles with new leaves, tiny blossoms, the flash of dress of spring. I am aware now of its coming as I've never been - the wet grass throbbing with crickets, insistent, keen as desire. Now, I feel what trees must - budding, green sheaths splitting - skin that no longer fits. It is obvious from this book of poetry why Trethewey was Poet Laureate. The South Florida Sun-Sentinel said it best, More than mere photographs, these are love letters that open like windows onto the temple of Aphrodite. Women are free to step into and out of the picture frame to learn firsthand from these religious adepts. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. wonderful poems By photogirl Great book of poems told from the point of view of a Storyville prostitute at the turn of last century New Orleans. "Ophelia," a country girl who is part black, has fled her backwater small town to find work as a schoolteacher in NOLA. Failing that (she can't get hired because she is part black), she falls into prostitution. Eventually she runs into the fabled photographer E. J. Bellocq (Storyville Portraits, MOMA, 1973 - Bellocq's c. 1900 8x10 glass plate negs were discovered in NOLA and bought and published by photographer Lee Friedlander). Natasha Trethewey is very, very good. You feel you are there. Describes NOLA and life in a "house of ill repute" very believably. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This is one of the most moving and hauntingly beautiful books of poetry one will ever have the experience of reading. ... By AC302 This is one of the most moving and hauntingly beautiful books of poetry one will ever have the experience of reading. It is a book I come back to over and over again, and each time, I am amazed at the beauty and power of the story and the words.

Selected as a "2003 Notable Book" by the American Library Association In the early 1900s, E.J. Bellocq photographed prostitutes in the red-light district of New Orleans. His remarkable, candid photos inspired Natasha Trethewey to imagine the life of Ophelia, the subject of Bellocq's Ophelia, her stunning second collection of poems. With elegant precision, Ophelia tells of her life on display: her white father whose approval she earns by standing very still; the brothel Madame who tells her to act like a statue while the gentlemen callers choose; and finally the camera, which not only captures her body, but also offers a glimpse into her soul.

From Publishers Weekly Following up her debut, *Domestic Work* (2000), which included a number of historical monologues, Trethewey's short sophomore effort is a quiet collection of poems in the persona of a "very white-skinned black woman mulatto, quadroon, or octoroon," a prostitute in New Orleans just before WWI. The Bellocq of the title is E.J., the Toulouse-Lautrec-like photographer whose Storyville prostitute portraits, brought out from oblivion by Lee Friedlander, inspired Louis Malle's 1978 film *Pretty Baby* and now this sequence. A stanza that begins "There are indeed all sorts of men who visit here" predictably yet elegantly ends "And then there are those, of course, whose desires I cannot commit to paper." Yet this is not generally a sentimentalized account of a conventional subject. Much more like Bellocq's artless, sympathetic and gorgeous portraits are lines like these, describing the "girls": "They like best, as I do, the regular meals, warm from the cooks in our own kitchen, the clean indoor toilet and hot-water bath." While the trend of the first-person historical novel (think Wittgenstein's *Nephew* as much as Corelli's *Mandolin*) has passed, the best poems here fulfill the genre's mandate to spice up the period piece with intellectual frisson; Trethewey goes two-for-two by successfully taking on the poetically dubious task of working from art and making it signify anew. (Apr.) Forecast: Despite the book's brevity, expect review attention, as well as short items in glossies profiling Trethewey with the requisite provocative Bellocq reproductions. National Poetry Month reviewers wanting to take stock of recent poetry by African-American women might place this book alongside Harryette Mullen's *Sleeping with the Dictionary* (Forecasts, Dec. 17, 2001) and Elizabeth Alexander's *Antebellum Dream Book* (published last year). Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Trethewey carries forward the lyric musings on black women's lives that she began in her arresting debut, *Domestic Work* (2000). Photographs served as inspiration there; here Trethewey fashions a one-woman monologue in response to a famous series of early-twentieth-century photographs taken by E. J. Bellocq in Storyville, New Orleans' red-light district. Portraits of an unnamed light-skinned black woman who stares into the lens with assured defiance galvanized Trethewey, who dubs her Ophelia and allows her to speak. As Ophelia writes eloquently restrained and resolute letters to a favorite teacher and tells the heartbreaking story of her failed search for respectable employment and her rescue from hunger and homelessness by a kind and patient madame, Trethewey creates a persona who belies the implied tragedy of her name by focusing her keen intellect on survival and, ultimately, taking control of the camera and her life. Like Cornelius Eady's *Brutal Imagination* [BKL Ja 1 15 01] and Adrienne Rich's lean but commanding poems, Trethewey's spare yet plangent verse portrait illuminates a soul ennobled in her quiet battle with injustice. Donna Seaman Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved A novella-in-verse that is a pleasure and a revelation to read. Garrett Hongo This Ophelia, Trethewey's invention, pierces us with lush, tough, elegant poetry, as she yearns to step out of a constricting frame, 'wide-eyed, into life.' Hers--theirs--is a stunning accomplishment. Gail Mazur Trethewey carries forward the

lyric musings on black women's lives that she began in her arresting debut, *Domestic Work* (2000). Photographs served as inspiration there; here Trethewey fashions a one-woman monologue in response to a famous series of early-twentieth-century photographs taken by E.J. Bellocq in Storyville, New Orleans' red-light district. Portraits of an unnamed light-skinned black woman who stares into the lens with assured defiance galvanized Trethewey, who dubs her Ophelia and allows her to speak. As Ophelia writes eloquently restrained and resolute letters to a favorite teacher and tells the heartbreaking story of her failed search for respectable employment and her rescue from hunger and homelessness by a kind and patient madame, Trethewey creates a persona who belies the implied tragedy of her name by focusing her keen intellect on survival and, ultimately, taking control of the camera and her life. Like Cornelius Eady's *Brutal Imagination* and Adrienne Rich's lean but commanding poems, Trethewey's spare yet plangent verse portrait illuminates a soul ennobled in her quiet battle with injustice. Booklist