

ANDREA REXILIUS  
*HALF OF WHAT THEY CARRIED FLEW AWAY*

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*Review by* GINGER TEPPER

Andrea Rexilius is not writing a revolution with *Half of What They Carried Flew Away*. She is writing the aftermath. Aftermath as invocation. Aftermath as transfiguration. Her language is temporary, existing only in the present and without borders. It occupies a space between words where clouds are synonymous to clods of earth are synonymous to saliva, which is synonymous with a word, a moment, a woman, a text, a body of water. By de-creating or erasing the respectable self, she bridges the gap between united and separate and brings the reader into “the living space” of possibility.

The transformational actors in this drama, which include they, them, us, and I, are mutually united. Rexilius suggests, “They could dictate a living body or wander through it and travel abroad,” and further, “They were living spaces. It was fair to say, shaped volumes. Sites. Configurations. They glowed. At this moment they were mainly sensory. A material that reorders the shape of the room they were in. It goes through them. It disperses.”

These characters are shape shifters, time travelers, memories, ghosts, outward social structures, inward psychological scaffoldings, rivers, fields, and songs. These actors converse through movement—at once bright, fragrant, here buried, there savage, but always free. In Rexilius’ words “they are very close and very far from objects”—energy expressed as breath, penned across the page in operatic totality. They are detail. But beware if you desire to know, if you are looking for answers, or if you are seeking to acquire, you have stepped into the wrong diorama.

Some people fear movement away from what is comfortable, fear contradiction. Rexilius is not afraid. She embraces paradox by dispersing

time. Time is always now despite perception; time is open—open as noun. She writes, “They come to the open between each breath.” In essence, she creates a system of being which chooses to stay in one place (form) while transitioning seamlessly in(to) another. There is no need for preparation. Time is both visible and a multiple of itself—both witness and the observed. To accept this discrepancy is to trust Rexilius when she directs us, the readers, to investigate how we normally look at the world. *Looking*, apparently, is not the same as *seeing*. In this era when separation and discontinuity (instability) reign supreme, the possibility of existing in wholeness while alone but not isolated (stability) allows catharsis.

To enter Rexilius’ menagerie of characters, which inhabit the constantly shifting landscape of her book, is to surpass the long standing Socratic form of dialogue between question and answer in order to experience the words of Krishnamurti and “relinquish something absolutely false: the traditional approach.” She asks, “Do you know these hosts? These analytic techniques of osmosis?” Her answer, “They are crucial. They should exist. They should plagiarize. They are always men, but this time they are women. Therefore what you are quite conscious of must evolve. Therefore a closure.” She infuses content with language that attempts to absorb and reflect limitation and brings the reader closer to experiencing, for lack of better representation, truth. It permeates conscious membrane and diffuses light in such a manner as to gradually demonstrate the art of entering.

This experience of entering is a journey through the space which opens up only after all guise of respectability is stripped away. This is not a reaction, but rather a sublime departure. Somewhere in the overlaps, in the fragments, in the juxtaposition of time and space and form, Rexilius introduces us to who we are without boundary, and for the first time we understand our own authority. We learn about ourselves without restriction, opinion, or parameter—free of convention, free of censorship, and not simply acquiring knowledge. If we accept Rexilius’ promise of transcendence, we emerge on the other side “glistening with what it [this promise] evokes.” In this manner, Rexilius does not write a revolution. She writes the aftermath. She writes evolution.