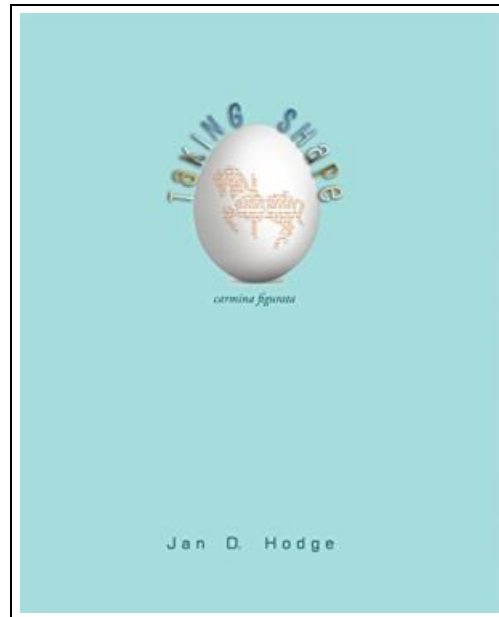


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Reviews

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(Mitchell Kuhn III)

TAKING SHAPE - CARMINA FIGURATA (HARDBACK)



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Able Muse Press, 2015. Hardback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****. An eclectic mix of shapes and subjects populate Taking Shape--Jan D. Hodge s full-length collection of carmina figurata (sometimes called shaped poems, pattern poetry, or figure poems). Hodge s many masterpieces include depictions of a saxophone, a Madonna and Child, a combination piano/guillotine, and other silhouettes of amazing difficulty and detail. These poems are not only visually stunning, they are also sonically beautiful, and retain a transcendent freedom while conforming to both illustrative and metrical constraints. Taking Shape is a visual feast of inspired poetry. PRAISE FOR TAKING SHAPE: Are not all printed formal poems shaped poems? The sonnet, the hymn, the sestina, and the ghazal all have characteristic shapes rather like boxes that confine their subjects. In Jan D. Hodge s Taking Shape the subjects have burst from their cages and confront us immediately with what they are. Then the words they are made of can reveal their inner beings. The long closure of Spring describes the best way to read these poems. I have long known what prayer is, but I never knew what one looked like until I read Madonna and Child. -- Fred Chappell, author of The Fred Chappell Reader Here is a perfect matching of shapes and poetry. Through a wide-ranging array of subjects and tones, Hodge s mastery of language within such challenging constraints is truly impressive. Syntax and rhythm, metaphor and symbol (see for instance The One That Got Away or The Lesson of the Snow), conversational snippets and quatrains, are surprisingly nuanced. Even the occasional poems--wedding, elegy, Valentine s day, Halloween, Christmas, an early morning poetry reading--find new things to say and striking ways to say them. These poems reward reading again and...



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