

## **Book Review**

**Title:** *The Hospital Poems*

**Author:** Jim Ferris

**Publisher:** Main Street Rag, 2004

Paper, ISBN: 1-930907-52-4, 54 pp.

**Cost:** \$14.00 USD

**Reviewer:** Steven E. Brown

Jim Ferris's poems move me. That is the highest praise I can offer. In this selection of thirty-eight poems, divided into three sections, "Child of No One," "Soul Music," and "The Treatment," the reader follows Jim from early childhood to the present, while he dissects his hospital experiences and his evolution from a child with a difference to a writer with a disability.

In a first section poem, "Meat," Ferris writes: "Between four and five they bring down the meat/ from recovery..." (p. 5) a commentary about how hospitals treat patients and how patients engage in their own observations about hospitals and medical treatment.

In the final poem of the book the author includes a self-indictment of what some term a "crip hierarchy." In "Biological Determinism," Ferris starts: "Jockeying for position" then writes, "Only one can win." He does not. He misses finding the girl of his hospital dreams, who "was the light/ we yearned to buzz around" and who is surrounded by the competition by the time Ferris arrives. Yet, he concludes, as must we all, with or without disabilities, as we move through life, he must plan on "getting up again, again." (p. 54)

One can critique poetry, like all art, by all sorts of standards. But at the most fundamental level, they both still revolve around the concept, "I know what I like." These poems have depth, movement, and emotion. I like them. I recommend you get to know them as well.