



Next Door to the Dead: Poems (Kentucky Voices)

Kathleen Driskell

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When Kathleen Driskell tells her husband that she's gone to visit the neighbors, she means something different than most. The noted poet -- whose last book, *Seed across Snow*, was twice listed as a national bestseller by the Poetry Foundation -- lives in an old country church just outside Louisville, Kentucky. Next door is an old graveyard that she was told had fallen out of use. In this marvelous new collection, this turns out not to be the case as the poet's fascination with the "neighbors" brings the burial ground back to life.

Driskell frequently strolls the cemetery grounds, imagining the lives and loves of those buried beside her property. These "neighbors," with burial dates as early as 1848, inspire poems that weave stories, real and imagined, from the epitaphs and unmarked graves. Shifting between perspectives, she embraces and inhabits the voices of those laid to rest while also describing the grounds, the man who mows around the markers, and even the flocks of black birds that hover above before settling amongst the gravestones.

Next Door to the Dead transcends time and place, linking the often disconnected worlds of the living and the deceased. Just as examining the tombstones forces the author to look more closely at her own life, Driskell's poems and their muses compel us to examine our own mortality, as well as how we impact the finite lives of those around us.

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