

Winter's Tongue by Josiah Tripoli
Illustrated by Josh Tripoli & Rebekah Lewis
Review by April Pameticky

Collaboration is that rare chemistry that reveals more than the sum of its parts. In *Winter's Tongue*, the verse of Josiah Tripoli was paired with the illustrative work of Josh Tripoli and Rebekah Lewis. Twenty-two poems inspired accompanying blue and black prints carefully carved from Styrofoam plates. The result is a debut chapbook collection that reflects the growing artistic collective here in Wichita.

WINTER'S TONGUE



BY JOSIAH TRIPOLI

Many of the poems show lines embedded in the meter rather than image, indicating a syncopated concession to sound. From “Ensoulement,” Tripoli writes, “Detached his life from friends and foes / To evade the crashing highs and lows / Thrills and passions thus enclosed.” While I thoroughly enjoyed reading this on my own, I would very much like to hear how the poet reads these lines— if the emphasis I inadvertently add due to the natural iambic flow is what the poet had in mind.

In “A Night Like This,” the poem opens with “My mind expands / As the pale walls condense / Nothing but my thoughts / on a night like this.” There’s a lyrical quality to each of the poems, a dependence on the oral phrases.

Despite the frustration and angst revealed in many of these poems, small moments of light and hope shine through. In “You II,” the narrative voice speaks angrily at an unknown opponent, the use of rhetorical questions scathing. Defiantly, the speaker says in “the ignorance of your cynical scorn / You think I would give up a / Moment of clarity for you?” As unhappy as the truth makes the speaker, there’s an acceptance that the truth is better than any superfluous encounter or relationship.

What makes this collection worth further examination, separate from the charm of the verse, is the pairing of art prints for each poem. Simplistic and minimal in nature, the prints feel like some ancient representations of a bygone civilization, like a tribal shaman drawing on a cave wall. The simplicity is deceptive, however, as sophistication is revealed upon closer inspection.

While printed versions of the chapbook are available upon request, I invite readers to look [here](#):



Matt Riedl of the Wichita Eagle.

One thing to note: Josh Tripoli and Rebekah Lewis have formed the **Lupoli Collective**. Chances are pretty high that if you've admired a local mural here in the ICT, you've probably admired the artistic work of this pair. It will be interesting to see future collaborations that include the Lupoli Collective and Josiah Tripoli's lyric work.

For more information about the Lupoli Collective and local murals, "[There's a new hip photo spot](#)" by