

Classic Poetry Series

Elton Glaser
- poems -

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Elton Glaser(1945-)

A longtime resident of Ohio, poet Elton Glaser was born and raised in Louisiana and earned an MFA from the University of California, Irvine. Glaser's collections of poetry include *Relics* (1984); *Tropical Depressions* (1988), which won the Iowa Poetry Prize; *Color Photographs of the Ruins* (1992); *Winter Amnesties* (2000); and *Pelican Tracks* (2003). His sixth collection, *Here and Hereafter* (2005), received the Arkansas Poetry Award.

Glaser's awards include fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and from the Ohio Arts Council. In 1996 he received the Ohioana Poetry Award. He has taught at the University of Akron in Akron, Ohio, and served as editor of the Akron Series in Poetry at the University of Akron Press.

Smoking

I like the cool and heft of it, dull metal on the palm,
And the click, the hiss, the spark fuming into flame,
Boldface of fire, the rage and sway of it, raw blue at the base
And a slope of gold, a touch to the packed tobacco, the tip
Turned red as a warning light, blown brighter by the breath,
The pull and the pump of it, and the paper's white
Smoothed now to ash as the smoke draws back, drawn down
To the black crust of lungs, tar and poisons in the pink,
And the blood sorting it out, veins tight and the heart slow,
The push and wheeze of it, a sweep of plumes in the air
Like a shako of horses dragging a hearse through the late centennium,
London, at the end of December, in the dark and fog.

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