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Review of *Leaf's Boundary* by Sheila Zamora · Sandra McPherson

*L'Epervier Press and W. D. Hoffstadt & Sons
Press, 1980, 57 pages, \$4.95 paperback.*

WE OFTEN CANNOT judge the worth of a poet until after he or she has died. Sheila Zamora was the casualty of her husband's violence. When he shot her, she was thirty-one and a student in the Graduate Writing Program at Arizona State University. Her teachers and friends have gathered her fine poems into this collection. The book is far more than a gesture or a memorial; it is literature that lovers of the art should have. It is a strong and complete first book, fortunately, for this is the author's only chance to be read.

Zamora's work is remarkable for its delicacy. The book could be written in pencil and thread. There is gracefully worded attention to light, color, object, and line.

IF YOU OFFERED, THE THING I'D CHOOSE

would be you drawing water
through a nest of fingers,

as the fingers
of an ordinary gardener want

to carry a few clear drops
for the rosemary

scattering its pale blue specks
among stones.

Her tone is genuine and unaffected; the beauty she writes about is not precious. When she visits Indian houses on the outskirts of Mesa, she says, "Our accomplishment / is to lose our footing / in places where they danced for rain." She can take such common poetic actors as geraniums and butterflies and render fresh results with a complicated tone: "Fragile, in too much / light, they fall like butterflies / on leaf-wings // multi-colored and deeply blind."

It is because there is an urgency of purpose that these fragile scenes become powerful. The writer comes across as a woman of vulnerability and sensitivity, mother of two children, who is escaping a painful marriage and finding her spirit renewed by friendships with her teachers, fellow writing students, and artists. Some poems ("April" and "In Return") portray the husband who would kill her. But for the most part this is a book about saving love, platonic and otherwise. Her age lends maturity of purpose to the excitement of the new poet discovering what new thing words can do. She wrote about what most deeply concerned her and made those concerns beautiful perhaps as a kind of consolation. Her poems are written with the tenderness she was seeking in others.