



Overheard in a Tower Block

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~~Editors Choice:~~

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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Growing up on an urban estate in a tower block is not a comfortable experience. Joseph Coelho's poems in this his second collection, are not comfortable. They are sharp, disconcerting, intelligent. They are also quite often humorous. They pinpoint experiences, emotions, the immediate, as he charts living in this world. They are snapshots of the bin chute in Binley House that is the mouth of the 'zombie of a block'; a tower block that literally swallows those who live there, the seagulls catching the bread thrown from the balcony, never landing, leaving 'just as his father left. Running through all the poems is a young boy's sense of dislocation in a fractured family 'captured dramatically and vividly in *A Child of Opposites* 'I stayed when my mother slipped/clung when my father drifted'. There are recollections of school, of friendships, of holidays, of a first kiss. These are poems to explore, to discover and to savour because they will not always reveal their secrets immediately 'as the Prometheus poet knows 'The vaults of the gods are hard to break into,/as thin as spider silk and treasure hooked' ' but they are well worth it. The experience is enhanced by Kate Milner's clever vignettes that mirror the awkwardness, the curiosity and vigour of the boy. Congratulations to Otter-Barry Books for bringing us this collection.

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