



DARK COAST PRESS

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To Whom It May Concern,

Paul Nelson's current work in *Pig War* (and other projects) is important for his development as an artist and is no doubt innovative in his discipline of open verse and field poetry. He aims to continue in the tradition of Charles Olson, Robert Duncan, and Lorine Niedecker, and I think his work fairly accomplishes that goal.

The majority of Paul's work is dedicated to place and experience. It is not the random selection of a subject, but is an actual introduction and re-invigoration of a method or way of living a spirited existence. Experience and meaning are under attack by our simulated and power-enforced society. Paul's work thrives in this intersection between the re-constitution of the individual—by means of spiritual action, perception, the senses, language and culture—and the revival of place—place as importance, as findable, yet most of all, unreproducible and unknowable. In an age of endless production, Paul returns the reader's focus back upon everything which already exists, reaching much deeper than sentimental naturalism ever could. He criticizes, investigates, and discerns right and wrong, meaning and farce with clear conviction. His defense of individual and place is exactly what American poetry needs. His poetics are built on honesty, examination, and humor, and include music, making noises, historical fragments, multiple languages, the ancient and the post-modern, and everything between. This is why his poetry is capable of being read by a large audience.

Paul has been a personal friend and source of many valued hours of discussion on discipline in writing. We have both written in solitude for extended periods in our past, and we both operate organizations dedicated to literature. The organization, self-esteem, daily focus and vision it takes for Paul to run SPLAB! (Spoken Word Lab) in Seattle for over 10 years embodies these traits in his character. In his writing, I can attest first hand that Paul has a great discipline for self-motivation and know just how much his work prospers in the gift of secure, quiet writing space.

He is a good friend, a good husband and father, and a great innovative poet. He would benefit greatly from all the Morris Graves Foundation Artist Residency Retreat Program has to offer.

Thank you for your time,

Jarret Middleton
Editor-in-Chief
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