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No New World

Von Wise II

Florida International University, vwise001@fiu.edu

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

NO NEW WORLD

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

in

CREATIVE WRITING

by

Von Wise

2021

To: Dean Michael R. Heithaus
College of Arts, Sciences and Education

This thesis, written by Von Wise, and entitled No New World, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this thesis and recommend that it be approved.

Campbell McGrath

Asher Milbauer

Richard Blanco, Major Professor

Date of Defense: March 18, 2021

The thesis of Von Wise is approved.

Dean Michael R. Heithaus
College of Arts, Sciences and Education

Andrés G. Gil
Vice President for Research and Economic Development
and Dean of the University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2021

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

NO NEW WORLD

by

Von Wise

Florida International University, 2021

Miami, Florida

Professor Richard Blanco, Major Professor

NO NEW WORLD is a collection of poetry that follows the establishment, development, and decline of an imagined mid-Atlantic town. Using a blend of historical fact and fiction, the poems open up space for reflection on the historical progress of civilization as a making and unmaking process. The collection explores themes of colonialism, settlement, nature, survival, erasure, civic development, and cyclical forms. The poems take on a variety of styles and tones, shifting between poems from personal life and more oracular poems, creating an oscillation between the human and non-human perspectives that situate and collectively establish the cohesive organism of a town. Ultimately, NO NEW WORLD forms a polyphonic, centuries-spanning narrative whose main themes concern the passage of time and the perpetual discourse of forces swelling and contracting. It wrestles with the contradiction of multiple perspective and the need to define the context of place even as that concept dissolves.

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Every City

Every city begins
with a drop of blood
entering the soil

whether through work or war
rich with the same crimson
bleeding through the sky

as the sun stitches the next day
onto the horizon.

Every city begins
with enough force
to split open the land

with the imagination
and impose the river
against its banks,

to lift and wield the mountain
as a giant shield.

Every city wrings the soil
loose, rings bells like birds,
stretches out in repose

to think about itself,
lulled into a pleasant daydream
by the warm buzz of the sun

and a million tiny crawling things.



144 Walnut St.
Daniel L. Larson House

1858
Greek Revival Style

Rising

The city sometimes
gets caught up in the image

of itself, the dream
that is the opposite of existence.

Relishing the world
of possibility can sour the earth,

turn tedious the process
of *making* and *being*, a chore to be put off.

Of course the city
wants to grow into itself. But what is *itself*

and what will it
take to actually, really pull itself up

out of the stones, streams, grass...

Newspaper Triptych

*All text comes from articles published in the Clinton Democrat between 1851-1852.

July 29, 1851

More Copy

The memory of the “oldest
inhabitant” runneth not back
to the time when our town was

busier than now. Every branch
of business is paying
better than it has done

before. Our gentlemen of leisure
have caught the infection
of industry and the impulses

of enterprise move
the once stagnant blood
of the body corporate.