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*Book review*

**BLITZKRIEG BY JOHN GOSSLEE  
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*Blitzkrieg* by John Gosslee, published last year by Rain Mountain Press, is an innovative collection of poetry, prose, criticism, and illustration that captures a beautiful proliferation of text into the greater world. This collection is inspired by the intriguing life that Gosslee's own poem "Portrait of an Inner Life" took on post-publication. By documenting the enjoyable, thought-provoking journey of his own work, *Blitzkrieg*, in about fifty pages, demonstrates a multitudinous life with which a text can be blessed and artfully captures both the tribulations and celebrations that a text put forth into the world encounters.

This art, however, is not immediately discernable by or explained to the reader, so the reader may be confused pacing through the opening pages. *Blitzkrieg's* introductory section, a collection of fourteen poignant scenic poems, may at first appear to struggle for cohesion as Gosslee drops in and out of these moment-of-life poems. The poems, each no longer than fifteen lines, offer a blitzkrieg in and of themselves in brief and impactful resonations. Disorientation becomes method here.

The emphasis of the collection is on place and consists of a series of poems that create a scene in just a handful of lines. While some poems, such as "Manhattan in the Fall," are tethered to specific places, other poems, such as "A Water Can Sprays a Flowered City" or "2nd Avenue," remain geographically ambiguous, perhaps to retain a sense of movement without the rigidity of a road map or itinerary looming in the reader's mind. The lines of the poems offer lovely, albeit brief, moments in these places. "I Stop like an Axe Flung into a Tree," "In the Presence of a Shadow," "Lorelei" and "Silent" are particularly noteworthy poems of the collection, each masterfully creating a physical scene by invoking the emotive force of the speaker.

The second section of the book, "Migration of Portrait of an Inner Life," is where the art of *Blitzkrieg* comes to fruition. In its sixteen-page essay, Gosslee gives the reader the comprehensive biography of his poem "Portrait of an Inner Life." The reader travels with the single poem from first draft through edits, publishing battles, and criticisms. The reader glimpses the burgeoning life of the poem itself. Having eventually found great success with the poem, Gosslee goes on to document his subsequent just-short-of-legal projects with his poem—"it is art," Gosslee claims, "which makes it right"—in order to put poetry out into the world. This endeavor includes chucking numerous bottles containing the poem into numerous bodies of water and also a sticker campaign. At least two thousand of these stickers have found themselves on bathroom walls, office drawers, and other places.

The question of cohesion in the first section is thus answered, the diaspora of "Portrait of an Inner Life" linking wonderfully to the brief scenic poems. One wants to instantly go back and reread the earlier poems, wondering if a sticker or bottle could be outside (or inside, just unmentioned) the speaker's scope. Gosslee cannot possibly fathom all the niches into which his poem may have found its way, so the preceding identified and unidentified place-poems create a wonderful effect for the reader, as one is left to ponder all the places a text can reach.

*Blitzkrieg* ends with a section titled "Ephemera," a documentation of the various art forms into which the poem is reborn, including some photos of Gosslee's own poem-in-a-bottle and sticker endeavors, along with a number of illustrations inspired by his work. In black and white and shrunken down to page size, surely the works of Yumi Sakugawa and Scott

Kirschner are not given full justice, though it is enjoyable all the same to see various visual interpretations of Gosslee's own text.

Though admittedly thrown at first by such a thin volume offering poetry, prose, criticism, and illustrations, I concede this collage approach serves the project set out by *Blitzkrieg* in a rewarding, fascinating way. How better to document a poem taking on a multimedia life of its own outside the page than in a multi-text approach? Readers and particularly writers can appreciate the artful way *Blitzkrieg* demonstrates a text springing off of the page and into the world and how we might, as poets, continue to challenge and use materiality.