



Moments Without Names: New and Selected Prose Poems (Marie Alexander Poetry Series)

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by [Morton Marcus](#) ▾ (Author)

★★★★★ **Fantastic Prose Poems**

By A Customer on May 14, 2002

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I have loved the poetry of Morton Marcus since his 1972 book, *Santa Cruz Mountain Poems*. Now he has released a collection of finely honed prose poems. Marcus anchors philosophical insights to dazzling imagery and metaphors. He explores the line between essay and poem, prose and poetry--but he remains firmly grounded as a poet. His work is accessible, appealing, and profound.

If you like to read material that uses vivid word pictures to deal with thought-provoking subjects ranging from childhood to our place in the cosmos, then this is the perfect book. Marcus is never didactic, but pulls us brilliantly into his world and helps us to see as he does.

In "My Father's Hobby," Marcus describes a man who collects sneezes--and makes the whole description work perfectly. "Fire" is an extended poem in 26 short parts. Beginning with a burning house that "...seemed a god had gotten loose inside and was raving against his creation..." Marcus effortlessly alludes to Troy, the burning of Rome, Alexandria, the Chinese poet Wei Chuang, cremating Shelley's body, Aborigines, and many other elements in a masterful display. "My Encounter with the Eternal Mystery" not only holds us in suspense, but allows us to make the supreme discovery at the same time the narrator does.

In one of the final poems in the book, "The Library," Marcus writes, "When I die, I will be a book on a shelf in the library, and this notion doesn't bother me. I look forward to leaning against Melville and Montaigne, and I can't wait to stand in the ranks shoulder to shoulder with Rabelais, Sterne, and Twain..." He goes on to mention Cervantes, Chekhov, Dostoyevsky, Li Po, Whitman (and he should have added Borges). *Moments Without Names* fits well with the books of these authors, and even enlarges the literary world of these giants. *Moments Without Names* certainly deserves a wide reading, and I recommend it enthusiastically.

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