

## REVIEWED BY RANDY BROOKS

*Winterizing* by Benedict Grant (Red Moon Press, Winchester, VA: 2024)  
136 pages, 4.25”x 6.5”. Four-color card covers, perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-958408-39-1. \$20 from [redmoonpress.com](http://redmoonpress.com).

The title of Benedict Grant’s second collection, *Winterizing*, refers to a quote by Thoreau: “In winter every man is, to some extent, dormant, just as some animals are but partially awake.” As I read Grant’s poems, I identify with the poet’s sense of loss and frustration. Consider this one:

clear blue sky  
that moment you sense  
a *but* coming

It is a beautiful day and yet instead of enjoying the consonance of being, the speaker instinctively turns to dread that there must be something coming soon to ruin it. This “winterizing” is not a matter of preparing for the coming spring; it is an expectation that winter has infiltrated all aspects of our lives. As an example, he writes about a small town, not with a nostalgic “main street USA” conception, but rather as an ash heap:

small town  
the ash of a cigarette  
holding its shape

Grant addresses issues of war and politics with the same contrast of dread:

while we struggle  
to define democracy  
dandelions

Nature is not consoling us in our political struggles, but at least the weeds—beautiful yellow weeds, like dandelions—continue to thrive.

valley fog  
the long road back  
to trust

Sometimes it is hard to see where we are going and how we will get back to a promised land of love and trusting one another.

stargazing  
an unplumbed galaxy  
of gripes

Even the stars and a galaxy do not take us to wonder, but rather to an endless universe of gripes and complaints. This is, indeed, a cold, winterized kind of human dormancy. However, toward the end of the collection, we read a few glimmers of spring and hope, such as this monoku:

let's try this again spring

I will close with one of the most hopeful poems coming out of this long winter:

renewing our vows  
a candle still burning  
in a sunlit room

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