

[PDF] Pieces Of Intelligence: The Existential Poetry Of Donald H. Rumsfeld

Hart Seely - pdf download free book

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Description:

About the Author Hart Seely is an award-winning reporter for the *Syracuse Post-Standard*. His humor and satire have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *National Lampoon*, and on *National Public Radio*. He is the editor of *Pieces of Intelligence: The Existential Poetry of Donald H. Rumsfeld* and coeditor (with Tom Peyer) of *O Holy Cow! The Selected Verse of Phil Rizzuto*. Seely lives in beautiful Syracuse, New York, with his wife and three children.

Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Introduction

The poetry of D. H. Rumsfeld (as he is known to the literary cognoscenti) demands to be read aloud. Like the epics of Homer, or modern African-American street poetry, Rumsfeld's oeuvre originated as oral improvisation, initially heard only by hard-bitten reporters and round-the-clock viewers of C-SPAN. Unlike most modern poets, who closet themselves with pen in hand, Rumsfeld surrenders to his poetic muse when confronting the boom microphones and iron-willed interrogators of the Washington press corps. During news briefings and media interviews, Rumsfeld quietly inserts haiku, sonnets, free verse, and flights of lyrical fancy into his responses, embedding the verses within the full transcripts of his sessions, which are published on the U.S. Defense Department's website.

A former Navy pilot, congressman, White House chief of staff, and pharmaceutical executive, not to mention a two-time secretary of defense, Rumsfeld has made a career out of turning divergent schools of thought into one coherent message. That versatility is reflected in his poetry.

At times, Rumsfeld composes in jazzy, lyrical riffs that pulsate with the rhythm of his childhood on the streets of Chicago. From there, he'll unfurl a Homeric tale cautioning us about the ways of bureaucracy. He'll fire off rounds of irony with a Western cowboy's sensibility, enough for some to call him "America's poet lariat." Or in poems like "The Unknown," his most disturbing work, Rumsfeld mixes Zen-like enlightenment and indifference, probably culled from his many trips to the Far East. "There are some things we do not know," the poet warns. "But there are also unknown unknowns."

For all its known and unknown unknowns, *Pieces of Intelligence* is less about national affairs than about the poet himself. From the era when gas stations held "little things" of glass to the leak-filled corridors of present-day Washington, Rumsfeld stands out as a man whose quest for real answers long ago required the kinds of questions no reporter dared to ask. "What in the world am I doing here?" he says, in "A Confession." His answer is no less a riddle. "It's a big surprise," and nothing more.

Sometimes comic, sometimes dark, D. H. Rumsfeld's poetry is irreverent but always relevant, occasionally structurally challenged and always structurally challenging. *Pieces of Intelligence* is the U.S. defense secretary's long-awaited first collection, combining precision-guided insights and a revolution in metaphorical affairs, to take the reader on a dazzling journey of the spoken verse.

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from **Chapter One: War is Peace: The Zen Master Poet**

The Unknown

As we know,

There are known knowns.

There are things we know we know.

We also know

There are known unknowns.

That is to say

We know there are some things

We do not know.

But there are also unknown unknowns,

The ones we don't know we don't know.

Feb. 12, 2002, Department of Defense news briefing

Needless to Say

Needless to say,

The president is correct.

Whatever it was he said.

Feb. 28, 2003, Department of Defense briefing

Muscles

Abu Zubaydah.

He had holes in him.

And he had some infections.

And he was not in great shape,

And he obviously talked

When people asked him questions.

And he said this, that and the other thing.

Has he started to give any intelligence?

I would assume so,

But anything useful?

It's not clear yet.

And I don't know that I want

To get into daily reports on it.

But his health is improving.

Now why don't the rest of you people

Go do pushups like this guy?

Look at those muscles!

He's got muscles in places

I don't even have places.

Look at him!

April 12, 2002, stakeout at the Pentagon

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