

BACKCOVER BLURBS

“Richard Denner is one of the most original people I know. Copying furiously, creating fearlessly, he begs, borrows & steals, and then invents something utterly unexpected and astounding—and he himself is the first to be surprised. He has too much talent for one person, and his outpourings reflect this abundance. (“Mithra cutting/the throat of the Bull w/a ZIP code”) He never stops to chip away, to enhance, or to reduce—it’s all there in a Henry Millerian stream-of-absurdity with blasts of wisdom. Quite amazing is Richard.”

—Gail Chiarello

“Richard Denner composes poetry with a light touch from a relaxed hand, getting progressively clearer, deeper and more profound through decades of practice. From Berkeley to Alaska, through Ellensburg to Buddhism, his classic insight is rendered in a fine idiomatic vernacular.”

—Charles Potts

“Richard Denner has always belonged to the alternative party, its Masonic-anarchist branch. His poems can be playful or run an idea a bit further than you’re comfortable with; they almost always vibrate, as he does. Denner is one of the edgiest people I’ve ever known, and in his best poetry that comes through.”

—Mark Halperin

“Out there stuff...it is you coming from that place...in a low-rider with tinted windows, no mufflers on the dual pipes, a hot chicano mama snuggled up against your pale Nordic shoulder.”

—John Bennett

“Readers who immerse themselves in Richard Denner’s prodigious body of work are fortunate indeed. His poetry offers a window into a vibrant intelligence; his voice echoes experientially the legacy of the Beat Generation with wit, humor, irony, and profundity. Denner’s poetic inheritance is deeply lived but borne lightly; his casual verses sneak up on us with their art and wisdom.”

—Katharine Whitcomb

“In the *Collected Poems: 2008-2018* by acclaimed American poet Richard Denner, the poet plays with the textual and sonic possibilities of what he calls his “poetry as path” aesthetic. Denner, stretches language into invented constructs and holds the reader hostage with tension and experimental forms that dance on and around the formal. The poet pays homage to the canon of poetic masters all while claiming his own rightful spot in American letters.”

—Xavier Cavazos

‘Richard Denner’s poetry ranges widely over political, social, historical, religious, and personal landscapes, using methods equally rangy—from language and concrete poetry to straight-forward narratives, but what’s consistently central is his delight in language, it’s harmonic sounds and textures, its quick-silver shifts in meaning and tone, its strange unreliability and reversals. The tones vary from rapture to a dark existential weariness, but the wisdom in the poems is drawn from a lifetime of thinking, reading, and living deeply.’

—Joe Powell

Gabriela Anaya Valdepeña

Richard Denner is one of the most prolific, and one of the most egregiously under-celebrated, poetic geniuses of our time. This is not necessarily to Richard’s dismay; he finds freedom in his own cocoon, even as he graciously accepts whatever honors he has been unable to avoid. This independence is his power; he seems to require no other validation than his own judgment and his private fancy. But like Whitman’s “noiseless patient spider” he takes the entire world into his gut, spinning a magnificent web that is sure to capture us all in time.

— Gabriela Anaya Valdepeña

Richard Denner’s poems are storms of desert rain. Short, intense, profuse and creating fertile ground. His work brings us to “a place smaller than the heart / but bigger than the world.” And if he is one of the first of his generation of poets to publish a collected work, it is perhaps because he has lived each day not once, but once again to savor its very tonic and to gain all there is of truth and beauty from the bough’s sweet fruit.

—Eve West Bessier

"I was just thinking about you...I picked up your book of poems yesterday and was flipping through them. I always seem to come across something satisfying that way - either funny or charming or lovely or sad. I've enjoyed having that book to flip through in that way."

—Holly Meyers

"Richard used to say to me, 'Don't follow the muse over the edge!' I have a drawerful of writings about Richard, including the period when he did just that. Perhaps all the great poets of any legitimacy spent some time in the psych ward. They are busy finding the edge of existence of words and experience. Beyond a certain point there are dragons.

If you want to follow the muse, but have no desire to go over the edge, Richard's poems are sonorous, evocative, rebellious. There is a touch of Bukowski, a foundation of Borges, and more than a hint of anarchist Pound. It might be cold, like the Alaska years, or intellectual, as Berkeley in 1964. But ultimately the voice is Richard's own. If you want to say tortured genius you can, though Richard might guffaw and say, "More rectal than cerebral." The poems are the words, the words: at once earthy and delicate.

Dante's Beatrice lingers in these pages, unattainable love and beauty. New Gravity evokes "Cheri" whose Siamese cat I took on, in friend fashion, after she abruptly disappeared from Richard's life one day. Nobody said that having chased the muse you got to keep her.

Richard Denner is one of the post-Beats of the San Francisco Bay area, influenced by Kerouac and Ginsberg (who he regarded as a father). If he comes off his self-imposed silent three-year retreat on a mountain in Colorado, I'll attend his next reading."

—Anne Parker

"It's all there, the dark and the light."

—Luis Garcia

"A solid book."

—Robert Creeley

"Wow!"

—Allen Ginsberg