

JAMES O. McCRARY (1941 -)

James McCrary celebrates recent publication of his collected chapbooks *All That* (Moscow, Idaho: ManyPenny Press). He first came to Lawrence in 1965 and mostly has lived in Kansas since, except for short spans on the coasts. In the sixties he was an active poet associated with Ed Dorn, David Ignatow, Ken Irby, and John Moritz, with publications in *Grist* magazine. In 1990 he began teaching poetry at the Lawrence Arts Center and curated several reading series, including the Poetry Slam. He also worked with Burroughs Communications.



McCrary writes a minimalist verse that follows thought so closely that it becomes an abstraction. His writings have much in common with abstract paintings. John Fowler writes of this poet that "The simplicity of language, the sparseness of the word on the page, the way a few words stretched my mind across big spaces, all this is here." McCrary's years in Kansas have marked his language, as poet Charlie Plymell notes that this poet's resembles "a Kansan who doesn't want to waste any words." This minimal approach creates emphasis.

McCrary's writings are like gesture drawings of artists, where ink outlines horizons and encloses balloons of space. The first line of this poem sets up the philosophical framework, questions about "out there." Then the words suggest the very basics of thunderclouds gathering: clouds, movement, "electric," "a bit of wet," and then more movement. Then the narrator compares weather to thought, which is "there" and "here" at once or "t(there)".

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**Thinking about out there
the clouds gather
push east and south
to here
where hopefully they will
do what they do
covering both sun and land
with the mass of them.**

**some electric
some noise
a bit of wet
then move on toward the
easy hills of west missouri
or simply dissipate and
reflect above the kansas river
where the loss is obvious**

not much else is t(there)

Education: Jim McCrary received a BA in English (1987) and an MA in Creative Writing (1989), under David Bromige. Both degrees are from California State University-Sonoma.

Career: The poet has five books of poetry: *Coon Creek* (Cottonwood Books, 1970), *Edible Pets*, (Tansy Books, 1987), *West of Mass* (Tansy Books, 1991), and *All That* (ManyPenny Books, 2008) <http://www.lulu.com/content/4363355> . He has published a half dozen chapbooks. He has published in over 100 magazines, anthologies, and online venues, including *Exquisite Corpse*, *Caliban*, and *First Intensity*. He edited his own 'zine *Smelt Money*, print-version blog. He received a Phoenix Award.