

It's Like This, It's Like That

The Death of H.L. Hix, H.L. Hix (138pp, Serving House Books)

H.L. Hix is a poet, translator, and literary scholar who has written or edited more than 30 books.

H.L. Hix makes me cry. His new short fiction is a brief documentation of H.L. Hix's death resulting from an accident with a lawn mower. H.L. Hix endures a slow, gradual decline into pain and delusion, drugged bed-rest and nightmarish contemplation.

H.L. Hix has truly created a new language and a new structure to put it in, and as my expectations about the text were undermined I reacted in a hostile manner.

H.L. Hix makes me laugh. *The Death of H.L. Hix* contains some of the funniest fiction I have read for a long time. It is morbidly witty in its straightforward presentation of awkward moments, stilted dialogue and the biographical inanities of H.L. Hix's life, not to mention his self-conscious reflection upon them.

H.L. Hix is showing information to help you better understand the purpose of a page.

H.L. Hix makes me think. Is life really this mundane? Does death creep up on us when least expected or is it always there? Is there life before death? Do we leave any sense or trace of self after death? And is the death of self anything to do with the confusion between H.L. Hix the author and H.L. Hix the fictional subject of this book?

H.L. Hix did not make up anything here. H.L. Hix is no stranger to writing.

H.L. Hix makes me read. He is subversively experimental. Some books belabour their form or writing process, making the architecture or support structure visible, but not H.L. Hix. Yes, the book has been shaped, and each section is prefaced by a definition of a word, and a slow accumulation of asides, quotations and false logic, but it is easy to grasp the shape and nothing is difficult to read; the bulk of the book is straightforward storytelling.

H.L. Hix hears the humming of the ultimate and universal fate that unites writer, reader, and written-of into the one protagonist of the one story.

H.L. Hix makes me nostalgic. I wonder about my past and what I miss now, what I have invented, conjured and forgotten from my childhood. How do my children perceive our shared past? Can a family share memories? Are we all singular and alone? Did it really happen? How much of H.L. Hix the character is informed by H.L. Hix the author?

H.L. Hix makes me think there are ways we are continually retrieving, renewing; or maybe it is truer to say, some force moves through the writing.

H.L. Hix makes me worry. About his state of mind, about my state of mind. Why does he write what he does? Why do I read what he writes? Did it really happen? Does anything really happen? And does it matter?

H.L. Hix makes me my own best guess at chaos, catches me rattling.

H.L. Hix will be the death of me.

Rupert Loydell