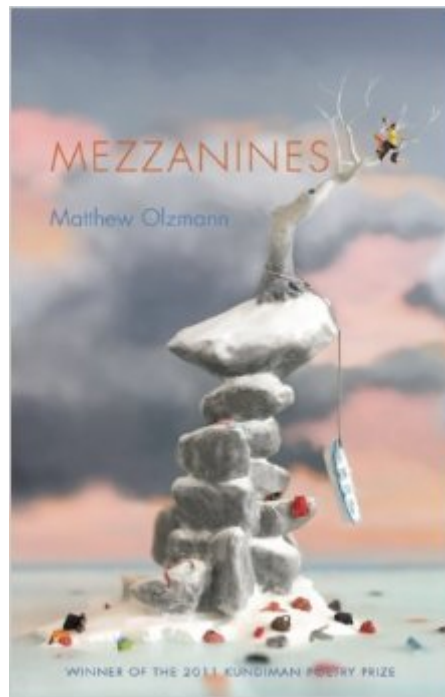


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# Mezzanines



## Synopsis

"There's something inherently spiritual about Olzmann's Mezzanines. . . . It's a place of reflection and contemplation, a temporary reprieve from the world's chaos and a reach for a vision of paradise." #151;The Los Angeles Review of Books#147;. . .the poems [in Mezzanines] have doors that open and invite you inside. The rooms of the house may be odd, and the stairwells may lead in strange directions, but you, as the reader, remain beckoned. [Olzmann] hasn't invited you in just to leave you. He's got stories to tell, and they're good. • #151;The Huffington Post Blog

There is no place Matthew Olzmann doesn't visit in his poignant debut. From underwater to outer space, Mezzanines is a contained universe, constantly shifting through multiple perceptions of the surreal and the real. A lyrical conversation with mortality, Olzmann explores identity, faith, and our sense of place, with an acute awareness of our minute existence.

From "NASA Video Transmission Picked Up By Baby Monitor": How many shadows are there left to name? Logophobia is the fear of words. Keraunothnetophobia is the fear of falling man-made satellites. Imagine this last one: you walk outside and look to heaven expecting a sky lab plunging down on you #151; wire everywhere, bolts loosening, metal body in flames. Instead, you see only blue, endless blue, the color of a baby's new blanket, cloaking everything.

Matthew Olzmann is a graduate of the MFA program for writers at Warren Wilson College. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in Kenyon Review, New England Review, Inch, Gulf Coast, Rattle, and elsewhere. He's received fellowships from Kundiman and the Kresge Arts Foundation. Currently, he is a writer-in-residence for the InsideOut Literary Arts Project and the poetry editor of The Collagist.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I am not a writer or a poet... but I absolutely loved this book. I think Stacy Parker Le Melle sums it up much better than I can in her recent article / interview in the Huffington Post ([...]She says:"I've seen Olzmann read a few times in our hometown of Detroit, and he is the only poet I've ever heard earn big laughs -- real that was funny laughter, and not just the generous responses of friends listening to friends or acolytes listening to idols. He is one of a handful of poets I know that can win over those who think they hate poetry. I think he wins over the haters because he is funny. But also because the poems have doors that open and invite you inside. The rooms of the house may be odd, and the stairwells may lead in strange directions, but you, as the reader, remain beckoned. He hasn't invited you in just to leave you. He's got stories to tell, and they're good. He has queries. And he has revelations."Great book. Buy it. You will enjoy it.

I've read this book a half a dozen times and keep coming back to it, for it gives me a world I can smile at, continue to live in. Olzmann is remarkably original, sly in his authenticity. He gets to the truth without dragging you through the mud. Buy this book and keep it nearby.

Reading Mezzanines is like having a drink with a good friend. You were planning on having just one and then heading home, but you find yourself having another, and another, and you're both a little tipsy, and you can't stop talking. How inadequate you felt as you searched for a sympathy card for a friend who has experienced a loss. How a can of mountain dew in the refrigerator is the highest expression of love. How we wish we could disappear underwater, yet keep coming up to marvel at the air. What does the pest control hunter feel when he aims a rifle at a rabbit and remembers suddenly the velveteen rabbit he loved in childhood? What happens when what you never thought would happen happens? The speaker's voice is so familiar, as in affectionate and friendly, that you want to hear what he has to say. You turn the page despite the long to-do list on your desk, despite the emails that have to be answered. He holds our suffering with humor and shines the light of wonder on the pain, ugliness and ordinariness of the world to reveal the miracle of our existence, its brevity and fragility, and the mystery of it all.

Quite unlike other poets and poems being written today. Olzmann's voice is clear, funny, and

emotionally vast. Seriously--some poems are clever and straight-up funny. Others are heart-wrenching and honest. Many are both. Recommended if you're an avid reader of poetry, and also--and this is just a guess (as I haven't tried it yet but I plan to)--if you share this with someone who doesn't really read much poetry but has wanted to "get into it," this will likely win them over to the medium.

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