

PERSPECTIVES FROM ASIA

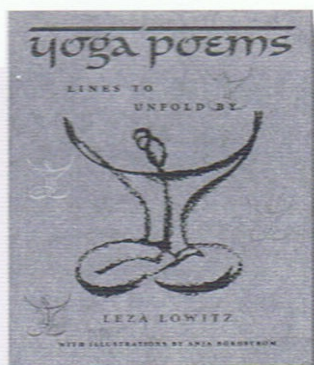
JAPAN ¥1200 US \$12 CANADA \$12 EU €8 AUSTRALIA \$14 HONG KONG \$59 KOREA 18,000KRW PRINTED IN JAPAN

KYOTO

JOURNAL

73





Yoga Poems

Yoga Poems: Lines to Unfold By,
by Leza Lowitz. Berkeley:
Stone Bridge Press, 2006, 126 pp.

Paschimottanasana

SEATED FORWARD BEND

Monk in snow
lizard on rock
bee in flower
stream in a mountain pass
kiss on long-missed lips.

Oh body. bury me in such perfections
and call them
a soul.



YOGIC LITERATURE has ancient roots, stretching back thousands of years to the Vedas. Read on a superficial level, these texts give us a glimpse of life as it was lived in the days before there even was an India. Yet there are deeper levels at work here as well. Under the guidance of a proper guru, we find that these supposedly simple pictures serve as a code for an underlying spiritual map. More than just a description of customs and rituals, we also get an insight into the psychology from which they emerged.

Leza Lowitz's book, *Yoga Poems*, continues this practice of veiled writing. Each poem takes the name of a yoga pose, revealing the physical structure and shape that the body takes as it works its way into these challenging shapes. At the same time we are invited to share the thoughts of a

woman as she develops a new relationship to both her body and to the world through which it moves. Rather than the "one size fits all" approach to much contemporary yoga writing, Lowitz speaks truths that we've all experienced, such as "can I eat an ice cream sandwich after class."

The book is divided into eight sections, corresponding to yoga's traditional eight limbs, and accompanied by Anja Borgstrom's drawings, each one dynamic and full of vitality. There is also a ninth section, "The Unfolding," which the author states is "a record of what came up in the stillness." Much like the words of the ancient sages who "saw" in their meditations the verses they would later share, these poems are the voice of the muse when she steps onto the mat.

— Ted Taylor