

SOLITON
ROALD HOFFMANN

P O E M S

Copyright © 2002 Roald Hoffmann
All rights reserved
Printed in the United States of America

New Odyssey Series

Published by Truman State University Press, Kirksville, Missouri 63501
<http://tsup.truman.edu>

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Hoffmann, Roald.

Soliton / by Roald Hoffmann.

p. cm. — (New odyssey series)

ISBN 1-931112-19-3 (alk. paper)

I. Title. II. Series.

PS3558.03468 S67 2002

811'.54—dc21

2002151574

Cover art: "Seaward" 1994 (detail) © Charles Seliger; private collection, London; courtesy Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, New York, N.Y.

Cover design: Teresa Wheeler

Printed by: Thomson-Shore, Dexter, Michigan

Type is set in ITC Legacy Serif

No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any format by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording or by an information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

∞ The paper in this publication meets or exceeds the minimum requirements of the American National Standard—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48 (1984).

Contents

Acknowledgments	vii
---------------------------	-----

I

Tsunami	3
Why I Didn't Visit the Camp	4
Shall You Dance?	5
Dream Corps	7

II

Isaac's Fall	11
In View of the Promised Land	13
Olive Tree Master	15
Imitation of the Mothers	16
Natural History	18
Cupping	19
Flat Stones Beg to Be Recycled	21
The Reflection	22

III

For Every Thing There is a Time	27
Raisins for Being	28
Oak Land in Winter	29
Black but Comely	35
Birdland	37
The Philosopher's Stone Found in January	40

IV

Proofs of the Existence of God	43
Oligopoem	44
Maya-Spectra	46
Le Chatelier's Principle	48

Malacology	49
Quantum Mechanics	51

V

Of the Land	55
Parallel Universes	56
Capoeira	57
Planck Was a Good Man	58
Proust and Cézanne	59

VI

Fall Follies	63
The Zohar of Aging	65
We Will Not Be Moved	67
Polheim, Dec. 17, 1911	68
Ground Truths	70
This-and-No-Other-ness	72
From Surfeit to Dearth	73

VII

Interface	77
Homecoming	78
Fields of Vision	79
Communication Problems	81
The Golden Boxes of Forgetting	83
Enough Already	85

About the Author	87
----------------------------	----

Acknowledgments

Some of the poems in this collection were written in a farmhouse in the midst of vineyards between Lacoste and Bonnieux, in the Luberon, France. Crystal Woodward introduced me to this landscape, and showed me ways to look at it; for this I am grateful to her.

Several poems have been published in periodicals and anthologies; I thank the editors for their confidence in my writing: *Chelsea* (“Natural History”); *Colorado Review* (“Olive Tree Master”); *Connecting Creations: Science-Technology-Literature-Arts* (“Why I Didn’t Visit the Camp,” “Oligopoem,” “The Philosopher’s Stone Found in January”); *The Kenyon Review* (“Flat Stones Beg to Be Recycled,” “Malacology”); *The Massachusetts Review* (“Dream Corps”); *Michigan Quarterly Review* (“Fields of Vision”); *Midstream* (“In View of the Promised Land”); *Notre Dame Review* (“Tsunami,” “Cupping”); *Pembroke Magazine* (“We Will Not Be Moved,” “Birdland”); *Rendezvous* (“Isaac’s Fall”); *Southern Humanities Review* (“Interface”).

About the Author

Roald Hoffmann's fourth poetry collection explores the beautiful and terrible world around and within us. He was born in Złoczów, Poland in 1937, survived the Nazi occupation, and moved to the U.S. where he graduated from Columbia University and received his Ph.D. from Harvard University. Since 1965 he has taught at Cornell University, where he is now the Frank H. T. Rhodes Professor of Humane Letters and Professor of Chemistry. He has received numerous honors including the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1981.

Roald Hoffmann has previously published three poetry books, *The Metamict State*, *Gaps and Verges*, and his most recent collection, *Memory Effects*.