

ZODIAC

Moikom Zeqo, translated by Anastas Kapurani and Wayne Miller. Zephyr Press, 2015. 152 pp. \$15.

“How can I tame for you this mountain / and pour it like a river, / or a waterfall, down to the sea?” asks the speaker in the middle of *Zodiac*, Moikom Zeqo’s fourth book. Written in the late 1990s, *Zodiac* moves in alluvial patterns, gathering the sediment of mythologies, artifacts, and cultural practices and redistributing them in the forceful current of Zeqo’s cascading, mostly unbroken stanzas.

Zeqo’s oracular voice propels the text forward with an effusiveness that might draw comparisons to Allen Ginsberg’s contemporaneous work. Unlike Ginsberg, though, Zeqo’s vatic voice occults itself through its sheer magnitude of allusiveness. Reading *Zodiac* reconstructs the act of divination, leaving readers to pore over the profuse star-chart of the text. Invoking Saint Mark and Jim Morrison, Viagra and the Golden Fleece, Zeqo’s project is iconoclastic, declaring, “I’m disgusted / by myth,” yet results in a cosmological bricolage: “I’d like to melt down images for you, / forging, in the process, a more divine metal.”

At times, Zeqo’s new cosmology borders on the androcentric. He gestures toward an idea of femininity in lines like “God, God—who isn’t

male— / God, God of the six-day pregnancy.” However, comparatively few feminine figures appear in *Zodiac* and the speaker urges the reader to “hear inside my bleat / the voice / of Rimbaud.”

Kapurani and Miller’s energetic translation allows Zeqo’s mixture of antic and mantic to shine through. This edition of *Zodiac* also presents the original text en-face, allowing readers unfamiliar with Albanian to experience Zeqo’s linguistic play, signaled by neologisms like “hum-animalgods, / godhumanimals, / animalhumangods.” In its playful prophecy, *Zodiac* smolders with a restless magic and affords English readers an important access point to a distinctive Albanian voice who declares, “I am an evolving cathedral; I deafen the universe / by ringing the cracked bells of my wounds.”

—Zachary Anderson