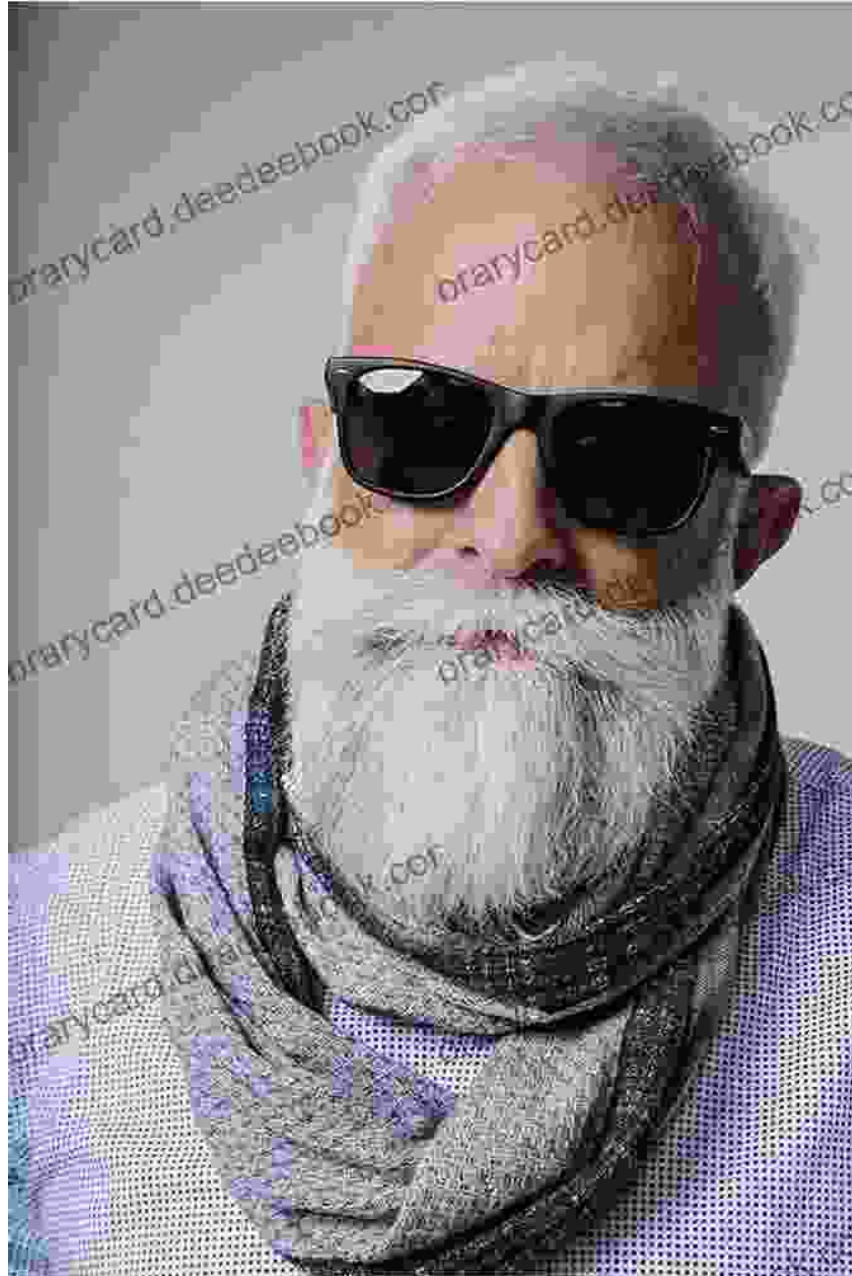
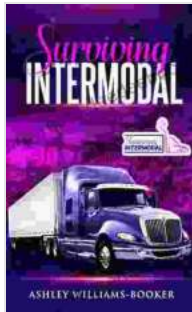


Surviving Intermodal: A Deep Dive into Robert Wrigley's Poetic Masterpiece



In the realm of contemporary American poetry, few works have garnered as much critical acclaim and enduring relevance as Robert Wrigley's "Surviving Intermodal." Published in 2009 as part of his collection of the

same name, this sprawling and deeply personal narrative poem delves into the complexities of identity, displacement, and the search for meaning in a rapidly changing world. Through its innovative use of language, evocative imagery, and profound insights, "Surviving Intermodal" has emerged as a seminal text that continues to resonate with readers and critics alike.



SURVIVING INTERMODAL by Robert Wrigley

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 6720 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Print length : 88 pages



Exploring the Depths of Identity and Displacement

At the heart of "Surviving Intermodal" lies a profound exploration of identity and displacement. The poem's narrator, a figure grappling with the challenges of an increasingly interconnected and globalized society, finds himself torn between the familiar landscapes of his past and the unfamiliar territories of his present. Through a series of vivid and poignant vignettes, Wrigley delves into the ways in which our sense of self is shaped - and often unmade - by the places we inhabit, the people we encounter, and the experiences that leave an indelible mark on our lives.

In one particularly poignant passage, the narrator reflects on the shifting nature of his identity as he travels from one place to another:

"I am unmoored from my self as the plane settles
Above the runway, where I'd watched a classmate
Two decades ago snowboard down a frozen
Hill behind the church."

Here, the narrator's sense of self is fragmented and dislocated by the act of travel. The familiar landscape of his past - the "frozen hill" where he once witnessed a classmate's carefree descent - is juxtaposed against the anonymous and unwelcoming runway where he now finds himself. This sense of displacement extends beyond the physical realm, as the narrator also grapples with the cultural and social disconnections that accompany his travels.

The Allure and Perils of Globalization

Wrigley's exploration of identity and displacement is inextricably linked to his keen observations on the effects of globalization. The poem's title itself, "Surviving Intermodal," captures the essence of this theme. The term "intermodal" refers to the movement of goods and people between different modes of transportation, such as ships, trains, and airplanes. In the context of the poem, intermodal becomes a metaphor for the interconnectedness of the modern world, where people and ideas are constantly moving across borders and cultures.

While globalization offers the promise of increased connectivity and economic growth, Wrigley also acknowledges its potential pitfalls. The narrator of the poem witnesses firsthand the homogenization of cultures, the commodification of human experiences, and the erosion of local traditions in the face of global consumerism. In one particularly evocative passage, he describes the proliferation of "the same box stores" and "the

same bland brands" in every city he visits, blurring the lines between places and creating a sense of placelessness.

"Anywhere in the world, you can find the same box stores,
The same bland brands. You could be in Phoenix,
or Providence. The placeless, safe harbor
Of the familiar. Home."

Through these lines, Wrigley exposes the irony that while globalization offers the possibility of connecting people across vast distances, it can also lead to a sense of alienation and rootlessness.

The Enduring Power of Memory and Place

Despite the challenges of displacement and the allure of globalization, Wrigley's poem ultimately affirms the enduring power of memory and place. Throughout the narrative, the narrator returns time and time again to the landscapes and experiences that have shaped his life. In these memories, he finds solace and a sense of continuity amid the constant flux of his surroundings.

"I am a man of many places,
But I am from one place.
The place of my childhood,
The place of my first love,
The place where I buried my father.
That place is always with me."

In these lines, the narrator asserts his deep connection to the places that have left an imprint on his soul. While he may have traveled far and wide,

his sense of identity remains rooted in the memories and experiences that have made him who he is.

A Testament to the Human Spirit

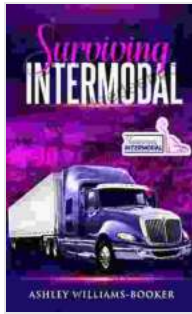
"Surviving Intermodal" is not merely a lament for the challenges of the modern world. It is also a testament to the resilience and adaptability of the human spirit. Through the narrator's journey, Wrigley explores the ways in which we navigate the complexities of our existences, finding meaning and connection even amidst displacement and change.

In the poem's closing lines, the narrator reflects on the future, expressing a sense of both trepidation and hope:

"I am not afraid of the future.
I am not afraid of change.
I am a survivor."

These lines serve as a powerful reminder that while the challenges of the modern world may be daunting, the human spirit has an indomitable capacity to endure and to thrive.

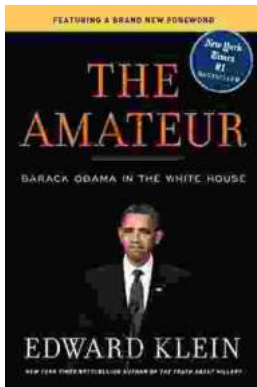
Robert Wrigley's "Surviving Intermodal" is a deeply moving and thought-provoking poem that explores the complexities of identity, displacement, and the search for meaning in a rapidly changing world. Through its innovative use of language, evocative imagery, and profound insights, the poem has established itself as a seminal work of contemporary American poetry. Whether you are a seasoned poetry reader or a newcomer to the genre, "Surviving Intermodal" is a work that is sure to leave a lasting impression on your mind and heart.



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