

From Synecdoche, Brief Book Reviews
by Vince Gotera
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Eden in the Rearview Mirror by Susan Elbe, Word Press, 2007, 96 pp. \$17.00 paper

It is fitting that the cover of this book is black with the poet's name and the title in light letters. The play of light and dark—chiaroscuro—is perhaps Elbe's central motif. We see "streetlight," "slag light," "knife-blade of sun," "tallow page of sky," "white-radish moon," and "blush-stained circle of a street lamp." Then darkness: "ink-smudged clouds," "the rickety blues of dusk," "Evening, russet as an old penny," "the splitberry dark," "Night like a giant manta ray," "the river--/a black, lacquered door." Against these monochrome backdrops, our everyday lives play out: "This world, a terror/and a luminescence." Each human heart "a lighthouse at the edge/of a cold and dangerous sea." What we have are "loves, carried like small flashlights/into all the darknesses," along with faith, loyalty, art, and yes, poems.