

## On Colin Dodds' poetry collection "Spokes of the Uneven Wheel"

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Many of the poems in this collection evoke Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Reality ruins dreams by its dullness, its ugliness and its natural restrictions so different from the absolute freedom in the world of dreams. This theme is common in those poems and in Oscar Wilde's novel: The selfishness and the lack of empathy of Gray destroys the talent of brilliant actress Sibyl Vane and pushes the young woman to commit suicide; his cruelty turns even his own portrait into a hideous picture at the end. In "Visiting Woody Creek Tavern" – one of the poems in this collection – "every day it gets harder/ to tell biting satire from a look in the mirror" and even freedom becomes compromised. "There is no respite/ from the vicious morons who'll take a selfie with your corpse.../ They'll find you in the wilderness, on the beach/ in the deepest drunk and furthest hallucination to show you/ how fragile each illusion of freedom really is."

Dodds' *Spokes of the Uneven Wheel* also evokes parody of a tarot cast: Whatever you dream will lose its colors and its beauty if it comes true. Dreams of love depicted in the beautiful blue and purple shades of the suit of cups vanish "as too-sensitive nub of the argument/ between a tattoo and a scar"...

Exceptionally, uneven spokes of the merciless Wheel of Fortune can favor dreams. "The threads of the screw/ are serpents/ and the screw/ has wings". "Love is the welt and the balm. It survives but never unmixed." Poetry is to dreams like the Celtic tavern mentioned in one of the poems of the collection: a warm refuge, a familiar forgetfulness that the stars lurch to protect dreams from the harsh reality, if only for a short while.