

There is a burnished glow to Alan Roddick's poetry, and his third collection, *Next*, is no exception. Always anchored in the action of daily life – whether it be a ride in a mirrored elevator or a roadside conversation with a friend – these poems speak of migration, family, friendship, aging and mortality. Writing from the eighth and ninth decades of his life, Roddick examines the past, observes the present and speculates on the future. *Next* is marked by a rare blend of uncompromising vision and deep compassion. Here is poetry that delights in warmth, humour, wit and grace, that revels in the beauty of the world, that insists on 'antirepuscular rays' at twilight even as it's asking the niggling question: 'Tomorrow, though?'

'My Last Poem' is the title of the fifth-to-last poem in Next, which beautifully indicates how Alan Roddick's work always has something more to give. He is a lyric poet who knows how to tell stories, and how to give full voice to the subtle pleasures of family, friendship and language. He has been publishing poetry for more than 50 years now, yet he goes on surprising. The poems here are tender, wry, occasionally heart-shuddering – and always attentive to the astonishments of human experience.

—BILL MANHIRE



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NEXT POEMS 2016-2021

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