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on Paul Zarzyski

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The river runs fuller this year, and I travel in
no particular direction, up and down river. The
trout slip onto the banks and offer me words of
encouragement, saying *River, yes, always river.* ("River")

Ms. Graham's work is unusually intelligent and courageous. *Seven Robins* is a gift for which we should be grateful.

—*Bette Thiebes*

Paul Zarzyski
The Make-Up of Ice
University of Georgia Press
Athens, Georgia
1984
\$6.95

Paul Zarzyski once boasted of being "a lover,/ a fighter, a Polish bareback bronc rider"—all with tongue firmly in cheek, of course. Yet with the release of his first major collection, *The Make-Up of Ice*, we find that he is not only all of these things, but also one of the freshest young poets to emerge in many years, with language nimble as a spring colt, yet packing all the brute force of a Brahma bull.

When the stuffed shirts of Academe began their postulations about how poetry "enacts itself," they could hardly have imagined the wild rides they would be in for when Paul Zarzyski came along:

After the grand entry cavalcade of flags,
Star-Spangled Banner, stagecoach figure 8's
in a jangle of singletrees, after trick riders
sequined in tights, clowns in loud getups,
queens sashed pink or chartreuse
in silk— after the fanfare— the domed
rodeo arena goes lights-out
black: stark silent
prayer for a cowboy crushed by a ton
of crossbred Braham.

But this is one cowboy willing to try on a variety of hats. Zarzyski is first and foremost a lover of words, and *The Make-Up of Ice* shows just how attentively he has listened to this language of ours. Besides his ingenious use of rodeo terminology and western slang, Zarzyski has that rare talent for finding those little-used words like "snoosebox" and "skive," as well as phrases like "rowels zinging" and "the pother of trout" that really bring his poetry to life. In addition to being the devoted philologist, he is also a comedian ("Hurrah for the Stock"), an epicurean ("Escorting Grammy to the Potluck Rocky Mountain