

# **The Properties of Perpetual Light *and* Dry Nights**

Reviewed by Paulette Coulter

*The Properties of Perpetual Light*, by Julian Aguon. University of Guam Press, 2021; 109 pages; Hardcover, \$23.00.

and

*Dry Nights*, by Pep Borja. University of Guam Press, 2021; 74 pages; Paperback, \$12.00.

The Properties of Perpetual Light by Julian Aguon (a book of speeches, essays, and poems) and Dry Nights by Pep Borja (a chapbook of thirty poems) are University of Guam (UOG) Press's premier publications of 2021. While UOG Press published An Islander's Voice, the work of Guam's only Poet Laureate, Frederick B. Quinene, in 2018, these new books differ in genre from many others from the Press. The works of Aguon and Borja also differ markedly from those of Quinene. They do, however, share with him love of life, love of place, love of others, and share with each other love of words--words that go straight to the heart, straight to the bone.

Aguon's book comprises several speeches, eight essays, and eight poems of free verse, all interspersed. The speeches include addresses to graduating classes at UOG, at William S. Richardson School of Law, and at Simon Sanchez High School, as well as a eulogy for Tony de Brum (which also contains a poem), and a poem for Teresia Teaiwa. The book concludes with a conversation between Desiree Taimanglo-Ventura and Aguon. Several essays contain poem-like structures in the form of single-line paragraphs. Besides love, several themes recur throughout the writing: destiny, beauty, quiet, and the sea.

Reviewing Aguon's book is a daunting challenge. First, the introductory pages of the book are filled with comments from regional and worldwide literary heavyweights. (What can a mere mortal add?) Second, the context in which this reviewer knows of Julian Aguon is law and politics, not a favored subject to review. *The Properties of Perpetual Light* is political in the sense that it addresses power, but not always within the political sphere. Furthermore, art itself is most political when it is least political and most nearly pure art because its very nature highlights disparities of power.

Aguon's title refers to *perpetual light*, and the first essay in the book explains this title. The term comes from a Catholic prayer for the dead. Like Aguon, many have recited it thousands of times (3). Contemplation of this title led to thought of polar summers where daylight disturbingly lasts for several months. That kind of perpetual light cannot be what we pray for. Aguon comes to a far better conclusion: hope as "a stubborn chink of light in the dark", faith as "our belief in the light to guide us", and perpetual light as "Ancient Beauty", love (4). He goes on to say, and thereby consoles the reader:

When we recite the prayer for the dead, we are asking God for our loved one's safe passage, and we are offering up the only thing we have, our love, to light their way.

This book is a little like that. Like a love letter to young people.

It seeks to call them forth. To do language and to do battle.

To write as if everything they love is on the line.

Because it is. (5)

This passage could easily be from a conversation or from a poem. This passage also demonstrates one of the powerful points of Aguon's writing: strong closing and opening lines, a topic we will return to later.

The first speech in the book, "My Mother's Bamboo Bracelets: A Handful of Lessons on Saving the World," is an address to the May 2009 graduating class of the University of Hawai'i's William S. Richardson

School of Law. The speech begins with one of those strong opening lines: “Despite what we’ve been told, the world is not ours for the taking” (Aguon 14). Not necessarily the most encouraging advice for the graduates, but realistic! Nevertheless, Aguon continues with a love story, the story of the Chamoru women who cut their hair (a symbol of beauty) and made a net to capture the giant fish that was eating the island of Guam. Aguon admits that he understands this story now as an adult, and it offers the first lesson, that “no offering is too small” and that “all of us, without exception, are qualified to participate in the rescue of the world” (16). Another lesson, especially true for the law graduates, is to “*go out and fight the fights that need fighting,*” not only those that can be won (18; emphasis in original). And why his mother’s bamboo bracelets? Because they are sounds that have saved his life, “back and forth on the kitchen counter, as she, after hours on her feet, gets dinner ready” (19); these are the sounds of love, of beauty, of the sacrifice of beauty to fight the battles that need fighting. These are the lesson that “the most cherished of all things” we have “is, quite simply, other people” (19-20). This may be the most valuable lesson for anyone.

Aguon writes of quiet in “The Ocean Within” as he advises the May 2010 graduating class of Simon Sanchez High School, “Get quiet” (57), he says. “If you can learn to be quiet, if you can become good listeners to your own ocean, you--and Guam--will be better for it” (58). With this speech, Aguon gives them a place to be quiet--the seashells attached to each graduate’s program, seashells gathered especially for them, a place where each may listen to the world’s great sea.

In the speech “Fighting Words,” made to the December 2018 graduating class at the University of Guam, Aguon discusses what may seem to be the opposite of quiet: breaking silence, breaking the silence of speechlessness in the face of barbaric attacks on humanity (74-82). In this instance, too, he gives each member of the graduating class a gift, a copy of *Overcoming Speechlessness* by Alice Walker. In this book, Walker recounts a story told to her by women in the Congo, women who had been sex slaves, who had been raped, who had been mutilated, and, in one case whose mutilated flesh had been eaten by her own daughter (qtd

in Aguon 78-79). Aguon also recounts a personal instance of being rendered speechless as a child upon witnessing his grandmother, who had dementia, being mistreated by other relatives and then himself being passed, upside down, between two of his laughing cousins after fainting at the sight of her (80). Overcoming this kind of speechlessness is necessary for survival. And, yes, the family was able to rescue his grandmother and care for her until her death.

The second essay in Aguon's book is "No Country for Eight-Spot Butterflies" (8), an op-ed written for *The Wire* and published in June 2020. This essay addresses the development of live-fire ranges for the military on Guam. This development is destroying Guam's limestone forests and, thereby, the habitats for native endangered species, "including a fruit bat, a flightless rail, and three species of tree snails[,] a swiftlet, a starling, and a slender-toed gecko" as well as the eight-spot butterfly (8-10). In addition, the limestone forests are home to many of the medicinal plants used in Chamoru traditional healing practices (11). This essay definitely addresses issues of power. The provocation for the essay, however, has inspired Aguon to join a "global initiative to mobilize people around the world behind a shared vision of social justice" (12), one of the characteristics for which he is known.

Aguon's op-ed for the August 2017 *In These Times*, "Birthday Cakes Mean Birthdays," highlights two things: Guam's precarious position as a political and colonial outpost of the United States in the Western Pacific and the value of life and loved ones. In August 2017, Guam was under threat of bombing by North Korea. The daily newspaper headline shouted "14 Minutes," the time a bomb would take from launch in North Korea to arrival on the island. Like many, Aguon went out and bought groceries (32), expecting to survive. Then he had to find a place in his car for the birthday cake he had ordered for a loved one. He writes:

I was fussing with the bags in the backseat when it hit.

Birthday cakes mean birthdays.

Another year in the life of a loved one.

LIFE.

Guam may have to bear the burden of being a colony in a world suffering from decolonization fatigue, but --to be clear--her people mean to live. (ibid.)

That last sentence seems to deserve exclamation points.

Among strong essays and their strong opening lines, one that goes to the heart and the bone of the reader is "Yugu Means Yoke," where the first sentence reads, "The last thing I said to my father when he was still alive was how I hated him for having cancer" (33). These are the words of a nine-year-old child, but perhaps the unspoken words of anyone who has faced the same situation, although as adults we might say we hate the disease rather than the person. These words get the reader's attention. And keep it. This essay also provides the inspiration for the book jacket illustration, for in this essay Aguon explains that he found solace on Mount Santa Rosa, finding there "a whole wide world" (34). The first inhabitants of this world he met were a family of tree snails, then butterflies, grasshoppers, other things with wings, which he watched day after day, praying for wings for himself. Aguon was not the only person suffering the loss of his father; so were his mother, his sister, and his brother, each grieving separately and in their own way (34). A friend, meanwhile, grieving for another cause, hanged himself in his home (35). At the conclusion of the essay, Aguon comments that when he notices his sister's grief, he changes his prayer: "I prayed for her wings, not mine" (36). This is a powerful intuition in a child who learned early what the French philosopher, Bernard Stiegler, has written: that care "always works through the care one takes *of oneself through* the care one takes of others" because these interpersonal actions create the individual self (178, emphasis in original).

*The Properties of Perpetual Light* also includes "The Gift Anne Gave Me" (41-45), "Nirmal Hriday" (46-49), "Reflections While Driving" (63-67) and "Nikki and Me" (68-70). In "The Gift" Anne is Anne Perez Hattori, Ph. D., currently Professor of History, Micronesian Studies, and CHamoru

Studies at UOG. The gift she gave Aguon was a glimpse of a photo of two Chamorus with leprosy who were to be deported to a leper colony in the Philippines in 1912 (45) and, albeit later, the story of this woman with no legs and this man who could not see but who escaped together from the Guam leper colony and remained hidden in the jungles for a month--despite the Navy's offer of a reward (41-42).

*Nirmal Hriday* means "Home of the Pure Heart" in Hindi, known by its English name as Mother Teresa's Home for the Dying and Destitute in Tibet (49, 46). Aguon worked there briefly during the summer he was nineteen, leaving when he began to question whether the home stood for any kind of social justice (47). In 2018, he questioned even more when he learned one of the sisters had been arrested for selling newborn babies (48). He examined pictures taken there and found one of children, the sisters, and the other workers at play. He writes then, noting the joy on their faces in the photo, "I don't know if hearts can ever really be pure.

"They can, however, be good" (49).

These sentences typify the brief, paratactic sentences that often comprise his essay conclusions.

"Reflections While Driving" (63-67), written in 2019, discusses the decision of the Ninth Circuit Court in the case of *Davis v. Guam*, a case in which Davis stated that allowing only "Native Inhabitants of Guam" to vote in a plebiscite in Guam violates the Fifteenth Amendment. This may be the most lawyerly chapter in *The Properties of Perpetual Light*. But not entirely. The last page or so of the chapter Aguon dedicates to the work that must still be done to build community and power in Guam: to create "the conditions where our people can live powerfully and live well" (66-67); and "to know [. . . t]hat we may be without a blueprint, but we are not without vision.

"That what we love we can save--even ourselves, even each other, even when we are afraid' (67).

This is a strong conclusion in the face of fear

In “Nikki and Me” Aguon gives the reader another glimpse of himself as a young person. The setting is a ride home on the school bus with a substitute driver, a driver who hates Chuukese. Aguon and his friend are in the ninth grade. A Chuukese boy, Xavier or X, gets on the bus, followed by another boy, to whom the driver gives a sharpened pencil, whispers something to this boy, nods at X, whispers something else (68-69). Aguon writes, “Time stopped” (69).

Aguon and Nikki get there in time. They also get thrown off the bus and have to walk home, all three miles. He writes, though, “[I]t’s not the walking I remember, really. It’s the talking” (70). That day he learned-- they both learned most likely, “We find our friends. And our way home” (ibid.): Another strong ending to an attention-grabbing and -holding story.

“We Reach for You” is a twelve-sentence “Statement of solidarity delivered in June 2007 at the 62nd anniversary of the battle of Okinawa” (62). It is much like a poem or a prayer. Aguon addresses the Okinawans as people “who know that death is only one kind of dying”, people “who hold up more than their share of the sky” in their effort to stand against militarization (ibid.). “Our Father” is a eulogy for the Marshallese statesman Tony de Brum. In it, Aguon quotes extensively from de Brum’s account of the events of March 1, 1954, the day of atomic testing in the Marshall Islands, an event that changed forever the lives of the Marshallese people and an account that changed the course of Aguon’s life (89). A poem, composed some time after de Brum told Aguon of the bombing, follows the eulogy. It begins with personification...

Justice and  
Patience are  
not exactly  
friends (91)

...and goes on to describe the losses of the Marshallese people “who watched [. . . / . . .] the rain turn into a terrorist” (another personification), who have lost their thyroids and their voices, but not their song (92). They have never received just compensation for loss of their food supply to contamination of both land and ocean, nor for their children lost to genetic damage. Aguon employs other metaphors in this poem:

Waiting is

Empire’s

favorite

game

[. . .]

and

Patience

a parka

of loneliness (92-93)

Aguon adds that the parka is provided in a place where it does not snow. The people of the Marshalls, however, especially the children, thought originally that the radioactive fallout was snow and were thereby further exposed to radiation.

“Yeye Tere” (glossed in the work as “(Mother Teresa)” (85)) seems to be eulogy, elegy, and/or prayer and ode to and for Teresia Teaiwa, a poet, writer, teacher, activist who “razed canons” and

stained glass and

tempered steel and

forged metal

of [her]  
students'  
minds. (84)

She also mothered students

from the  
milk  
of [her]  
mind. (85)

The combination of motherliness and engineering creates an interesting image. Clearly Teaiwa fostered growth and strength in her students. Aguon closes this poem with a prayer: "swim free" (86), a beautiful closing line.

Besides the statement of solidarity with the Okinawans, the eulogy and poem for Tony de Brum, and the tribute to Teaiwa, other poems pay tribute to persons, things, or ideas. "Go with the Moon" honors Aguon's godfather and his quiet. "More Right" honors his Aunt Lou and the star-shaped foraminifera sands of northern Guam. "A Crowbar and a Conch Shell" recognizes both Epeli Hau'ofa and Toni Morrison, people who

spun gold  
from pain  
loved us  
always a  
little  
more  
than we  
deserved (39).

The poem “Mugo” honors family (and asks his father “all [his] questions” (51)). “We Have No Need for Scientists” is a protest against sea rise caused by global warming and praise of the coral reefs and mangrove forests (59-61). “Onion and Garlic” is, despite its title, a tribute to childhood and freedom (71-72), and “Gaosåli” protests having a foreign flower rather than the Guam torchwood flower as the official flower of Guam (94-95). Several of these pieces have long lines, even paragraphs as stanzas, making them more difficult to identify strictly as poems, though their content suggests that genre. Others, however, have short lines and stanzas of varying length like most lines of “We Have No Need for Scientists.” Most of “Gaosåli” is written as short-lined couplets; one line (94, l. 7) is a singleton: “to gaosåli”.

Varied line length in poems and varied paragraph lengths in prose seem to be a distinguishing mark of Aguon’s style as well as strong opening and closing statements. The line lengths are visually noticeable on the page. These variations may be a result of delivering speeches, offering pauses to focus or refocus audience attention or to shift topic. In the poems, they capture the reader’s attention and hold it fast. In “Mugo,” for example, the first two lines are: “They say if you take the mugo’ from a dog’s eyes and rub it into your own you can see the dead. / They lied” (50). How can the reader not continue? Fortunately, for the non-CHamoru speaker-reader, Aguon offers footnotes with translations, but in this case, eye-goop is relatively easily understood. In the poem “Sherman Alexie Looked Me Dead in the Eye Once” (22). Immediately, the reader stops and says, “And. . . ?” because the reader wants to know why, what happens next, and continues reading! Aguon footnotes the poem about Alexie and states that despite accusations against Alexie in the #MeToo movement, he has included the poem because it is more about himself and his development as a writer than it is about Alexie.

Another captivating first line of a poem is “Go with the moon, my godfather says” (8). This godfather is a talayeru, which means that he fishes with a net, but more importantly that “he knows things” (6). One could say the topic of the poem is mañahak fishing, except that it is and it is not. It is about catching fish, but it is about more: It is about quiet. As

the fisherman focuses on the fish, the poem's speaker (undoubtedly Aguon) stops to "Watch a quiet man grow even more quiet" (7). The last two lines of the poem state, "And I stand in awe. / Never ever have I seen something so quiet be so alive" (ibid.). These lines draw attention to something most people are too busy to notice, the quiet that is necessary to do things well, the quiet that is beauty, the quiet that is the pre-dawn hour filled with hope.

Another aspect of Aguon's style of writing and speaking is the use of a single sentence paragraph. These may often be single lines or even stanzas of a poem. They function as marvelous beginnings: "In Guam, even the dead are dying" (8); "Despite what we've been told, the world is not ours for the taking" (14); and "My aunt Lou told me once that it is easier for our / people to believe in magic than it is for others" (26), as already noted. They also make powerful endings: "Because it is" (5); "Because we had so little, yet somehow we had it all" (27); "But then, doctors don't know everything" (52); "Our broken world is waiting" (82).

Single-line paragraphs between longer paragraphs in Aguon's work also make the reader stop and pay attention. They occur in all genres of his work in this book. They literally bring the reader up short. After recognizing that each family member mourned alone, for example, he notes, "We didn't stand a chance" (34). In a tall skinny poem in which the title, "We Have No Need for Scientists," is longer than all but one line of the poem and each of the five stanzas is a single sentence with one to four words per line, the second stanza spans the width of the page: "The inundated need no instruction on inundation" (59). Visually and mentally, this sentence is disruptive, just as a single sentence paragraph at the beginning, middle, or end of an essay of longer paragraphs is disruptive. It is meant to be.

The Properties of Perpetual Light concludes with a conversation between Aguon and Desiree Taimanglo-Ventura; reading it sometimes felt like eavesdropping. The two attended Simon Sanchez High School together, and their friendship is of long standing. They speak (in transcription) of time spent in high school and Aguon's famous (or

infamous?) blue backpack (96-97), of racism and how it keeps people from doing the work of creating art (98), of how this book forces readers to consider things they might not want to talk about (*ibid.*), especially trauma and loss (98-99). Aguon mentions “Yugo Means Yoke” and how a single paragraph there showed him “the moment a writer is born” (99). The two discuss writing, then: that this book is a love letter to young people; that Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner is a regional writer he admires (101), for she is “a lion with a pen,” defending the hunted from the hunter (101); that he loves music but no longer sings (103-104); and that he eagerly awaits the writings of the young people who read his work and dream of writing their own book (105). He advises them to “draw close to that well [of coming from a wayfaring people], drink that water, then kindly bring someone else something to drink” (*ibid.*). When Taimanglo-Ventura comments, “That’s beautiful,” Aguon responds, “Luckily for us, beauty is something else we’ve got in spades” (*ibid.*): Another of his strong, single-line endings.

While love is also a major theme in Pep Borja’s *Dry Nights*, this love seems to be lost and followed by sadness over its loss, a haunting of love. In addition, a key element in this book of thirty poems (ten each for 12 a. m., 2 a. m., and 4 a. m.) is ambiguity. For example, in the title of the book, are the nights dry because of no rain, no alcohol, no sex, or no love—or all of these? Each is certainly a possibility for the reader, and only the writer may know for certain. Yet ambiguity makes the work interesting. Also interesting is the book’s cover, which displays a butterfly, a *gaosáli*, and a canoe that suggests the sea, all items mentioned or written about by Aguon. The photo on the cover is that of a female named Billie. The dedication of Borja’s book is “To the bird, / the whale, / and the moon” (7). The book contains twenty illustrations by Constance Sartor. The title page of each section contains an illustration and a haiku; “Blooming” is a cinquain (18). These are a few strict poetic forms noted; most of the poems are free verse. “Ink”, however, is a tight quatrain with six syllables per line, and “Moonflower” has the thirty-one syllables in five lines of *tanka*, but not in *tanka* line order.

Dry Nights is a book of broken nights (as the reflection of the title on the title page indicates), of haunting dreams of physical love and loss, of memories and regrets. Some readers may find the references to sex, drugs, alcohol, self-harm, and bondage uncomfortable. And sometimes the love cuts so close to the bone that it bleeds. This is not a children's book.

Besides references to plants of Guam, to the ocean or sea, poems often mention color, hue, ink, writing, or painting. More than twenty of the poems name colors; the second poem in the last section is titled "Ink," and the second-last poem in the book is titled "Color." The poem on the title page of "4 a. m." reads: "I wanted you too. / Lay your paint on my canvas / Destroy me in hue" (49). Several poems refer to mythology and astronomy/astrology, with references to the constellation Gemini in "Gemini Eyes", its stars Castor and Pollux, the planet Venus (38), and "a Pisces song" (46). Others refer to popular culture, to the poet Charles Bukowski, the singer/songwriter Eryka Badu, and Pearl Jam's "Yellow Ledbetter" (40, 39, 56).

In the first section of the book, "12 a. m.," two poems refer directly to the moon, "Lune" and "Moonflower" (19, 20), though neither mentions the moon in its text. In "Lune" the speaker "saw your silhouette / Against the sunset, / [. . .] and wanted to come back / To you / [. . .] Over and over" (19) While the "Over and over" ostensibly modifies "Shaping your edges in sand / And the sea", it may refer as easily to the speaker's desire (ibid.). Besides the moon, Borja frequently mentions water and the sea: for example, in "Don't Yawn" (14-15), in "Dew" as a waterfall, headwater, rain-streaked leaves, and a riverbed (16-17), in "Lune" as "Crashing / Like wayward waves" and the sea (19); these are the mentions in only the first four poems of the collection.

Local Guam plants and animals also appear in the poems: "marble eels / Jumping butterflies" and cycads in "Dew" (16-17), torchwood leaves in "Blooming" (18), betel nut in "Chew" (22), jellyfish and plankton in "Bluebottle" (29), to name just those in "12 a. m." In the "12

a. m.” poems, those of the midnight hour, the structure of “Awake,” with its repeated question, has particular charm. Here the speaker poses:

If I asked  
Would you show me how  
You made the earth move  
Again? (26)

The question, despite its underlying intimacy, has a tone of innocence, which is enhanced by its repetition at the beginning of each stanza: “Would you show me”; “Would you let open / The leaves of all your trees”; “Would you let me taste / When I thirst / To appreciate you”; “Would you let / The river run. . . ?” (26-27), calling forth nearly each of the senses. The poem seems filled with homage (as well as desire), both to the person it addresses and to the earth, its other living things, and “the purple /Awakening / Of the sky” (27), the dawn several hours away.

Among the “2 a.m.” poems, the title of “Whites of My Lies” is a solid double pun on white lies and whites of eyes, nicely ambiguous, making the reader wonder which lines are true and which are lies and showing some respect for that “razor gaze [. . .] / Sharply lifted” (44, ll. 3, 5). The poem “Canoes” is rich, on the other hand, in its image of vulnerability, of the lateen sail tacking into the wind, and the reader, with the speaker--perhaps rendered more vulnerable by a Pisces song--can

imagine an ocean  
Between two exiles  
Their boat made of dream trees  
Moored in the silence of the seabed (46, ll. 6-10)

An ocean separates two exiles, although they have but one boat. Here the silence overwhelms, and the reader wonders how life-seaworthy a canoe made of dream trees can be. The second stanza of the poem confirms that doubt. The verses of the song are maroon, flotsam

that surrounds the exiles, and the speaker states, "I'd give anything / to be close to anyone" (p., ll. 12-13). Alone. Lonely. Very lonely.

"Billie," the seventh poem of "4 a. m.", may be this reviewer's favorite poem in *Dry Nights*, despite its sadness. Again, the element of ambiguity arises from the presence of the "Veronicas." First thought: Were these the Veronicas of the teenage comic books or the Veronicas to wipe the face of Jesus? Neither, actually, and worse than both: the gossip and rumor mongers of high school hallways (Leon Guerrero *Recent UOG Publications*), who speak "ruthless rabble" (60, l. 2) and are intolerant of difference, like Billie's "soft black bob / that none of them wore / and the bangs to [her] cheeks" (61, ll. 17-19), all lines containing alliteration. The speaker in the poem and Billie (in the photo on the book cover; Leon Guerrero "Edits to review"), as the second stanza of the poem shows, are compatible from the moment of meeting:

But when you walked in CHamoru

Third day of your first year

I knew you with without knowing

And you knew I knew it,

And from that point on

The language in class was old and easy

And it felt like we'd speak

In the sweet tongue forever (61, ll. 7-14)

Here the repetition of knew and knowing and the assonance (long e) and consonance (s) in easy, speak, and sweet create a nearly loping rhythm, a comfortable and comforting voice. Now, however, it is too late. A missed call and then, as the last lines of the poem tell us, whispers, and

At your viewing I couldn't come to your casket

My shame kept me stained in black

On the pew in the back

And I died inside as the Veronicas walked by. (63)

Like the suicide of a fourteen-year-old classmate that Aguon notes (35), this young girl's death is heartbreaking and revealed not only in the bruising on her neck but also in the harsh assonance of (æ) and the consonance of (k) in casket, black, and back, to which can be added the alliteration in couldn't come. Full understanding comes only later in life, when we realize, as Aguon notes, "That when we are in pain, we inflict pain. That when we feel we can no longer breathe, we grab other people's air" (35-36). Aguon's line may offer some consolation to Billie's friend, the speaker in the poem.

At thirty poems, Pep Borja's collection may be classified as a chapbook. Although he has published work before—including in UOG's literary journal, Storyboard, and in Indigenous Literatures of Micronesia (Borja 44-45, 93-94, 210-11), this publication is his debut collection of poems. These poems of love and love lost may evoke visceral responses. Some poems may seem as thin as skin, others as deep and dark as the abyssal plain, the bottom of the ocean. Depth and darkness are a part of life, a part of love. The launch for *Dry Nights* is scheduled for September 3, 2021.

In darkness, though, wherever there is love, there is also perpetual light—or at least its possibility, according to Julian Aguon. For this reviewer, and perhaps for other readers, Aguon's book may become something to turn to in moments of darkness, a source for meditation and mindfulness, whenever any of *The Properties of Perpetual Light* is needed. The book is well written and well edited.

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