



California Winter League

Chiyuma Elliott

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Poetry. African American Studies. Women's Studies. CALIFORNIA WINTER LEAGUE, selected as the Editor's Choice in the Unicorn Press First Book Competition, is a collection of stunning breadth and depth. These poems interleave the story of the poet's childhood hero, the pitcher Leroy "Satchel" Paige, with the tale of her own becoming and a meditation on the milestones that mark the passage of our seasons. The resulting tapestry presents an elegant landscape of experience, with remarkable discoveries in every contour.

"Elegant and mysterious, the poems of Chiyuma Elliott's CALIFORNIA WINTER LEAGUE confront pain with wit, loss with stern tenderness. 'Don't look back,' reads the book's epigraph, from Leroy 'Satchel' Paige, 'Something might be gaining on you.' But they do look back, and draw us into that devouring with an assurance as of dream. This is a first book of astonishing beauty."—Ann Fisher-Wirth, author of *Dream Cabinet* and *Carta Marina*

"Chiyuma Elliott is a believer in total immersion. With an ease that nearly belies their depth, her poems take you in. The resonant world CALIFORNIA WINTER LEAGUE comes from the poet's almost physical need to create interior space wherever she can find it—in the mind of her childhood hero, Satchel Paige, in stories of family and erotic love, in sensual still lives, and finally, in the stunning last section of the book, in time itself. This is a devotional book, but there's nothing dutiful about it. Ardor fuels these poems, and cunning crafts their arrangement. CALIFORNIA WINTER LEAGUE has some of the best page turns in contemporary poetry today, at one point, taking the reader with trust and courage from an imagination of Satchel Paige's interior life to the unquestionably real details of a woman's sexual life. The poems are as intimate as a honeymoon and as full of secrets as a funeral."—Katie Peterson, author of *The Accounts*

"Chiyuma Elliott looks directly at the past and finds her poetry's purpose there. Whether writing about the dark moments of our collective history or history close to home, Elliott goes deep into the trouble of who we are. 'Pain is in the details,' she says in one poem, fiercely and tenderly committing herself to the redress that is poetry's vital work."—Rick Barot, author of *Chord and Want*



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