

Review of Blue Wallpaper in *The Frogmore Papers, 94* by Rachel Playforth

Robert Hamberger's fourth collection swims in deep waters of human experience, but with a lightness and restraint which is perfectly reflected in his favoured sonnet form. Each of the six sections gently unpicks emotion and sensation bound up with love, loss, family, place and identity, from delicate reflections on the death of his mother, to sensual and adventurous variations on Rimbaud. Throughout the book are explorations of masculinity and snapshots of formative memories that add up to finding peace with a queer identity. The final sections – 'Husbands' and 'Being The Sea' – weave poems of romance, mourning and Brighton beach into an elegy for those lost to AIDS, and a wounded community sustained by love. A beautiful and moving collection.

Review of Blue Wallpaper by Gregory Woods

Blue Wallpaper (2019) is a book of quiet resistance to insensitivity. With his own experiences located in broader social developments – mourning beloved individuals lost to a worldwide pandemic, for instance, or becoming the husband of a husband after having been that of a wife – he is able, without grandstanding, to evoke the greater themes that lie implicit in the local, the personal, the apparently trivial. His modest attentiveness to subtleties of speech and touch has a resonance way beyond his own patch.