Professor Zdanys Publishes Cormorants

Jonas Zdanys

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/jonas_zdanys/29/
Sacred Heart University English professor Jonas Zdanys recently published a volume of poetry entitled *Cormorants*, which consists of 25 modified sonnets that are thematically linked together. This work was published in a fine arts, letterpress edition this past winter by Timberline Press in Boston. Zdanys worked on this book for a year before it was published.

“I have long been interested in how we can come to experience and understand the numinous and the transcendent through the aesthetic experience,” said Zdanys. “That is, does art allow us to experience the divine in a way that no other avenue—even theology or philosophy—can allow?”

Zdanys chose to entitle his work *Cormorants* because in each of his poems he used the figure of the cormorant, a sea bird, to construct a theopoetical framework through which one tries to find God in poetic articulations of lived, or imagined, experiences. Using various cultural and religious frameworks in his poems, Zdanys asked his readers to consider the idea that reality and the natural world are a legitimate source of divine revelation, mystery and of human expression of connection to God.

“I have, for some time, been considering the idea of theopoetics, the notion that both the divine and the real are mysterious and that through poetry, or the other arts, we can more fully experience the divine,” said Zdanys. “I wrote the poems to see how I could use the poetic experience to connect to a deeper understanding of God across cultures and especially within the natural world.”

Since it was published, *Cormorants* has received recognition for its method of approaching both the human and natural world. This publication began when Zdanys was part of University President John Petillo’s seminar on the Catholic intellectual traditions. This seminar is a year-long course that brings together 10 to 12 full-time members of the faculty to study the 2,000-year-old Catholic intellectual traditions that are the foundation of the University.

“It is because of the President’s Seminar that I was able to form a coherent approach to, and a deeper understanding of, the relationship between the aesthetic and the divine,” said Zdanys. “I
hope that I will be able to continue my work on theopoetics in the future and shed more light on this area of study.”