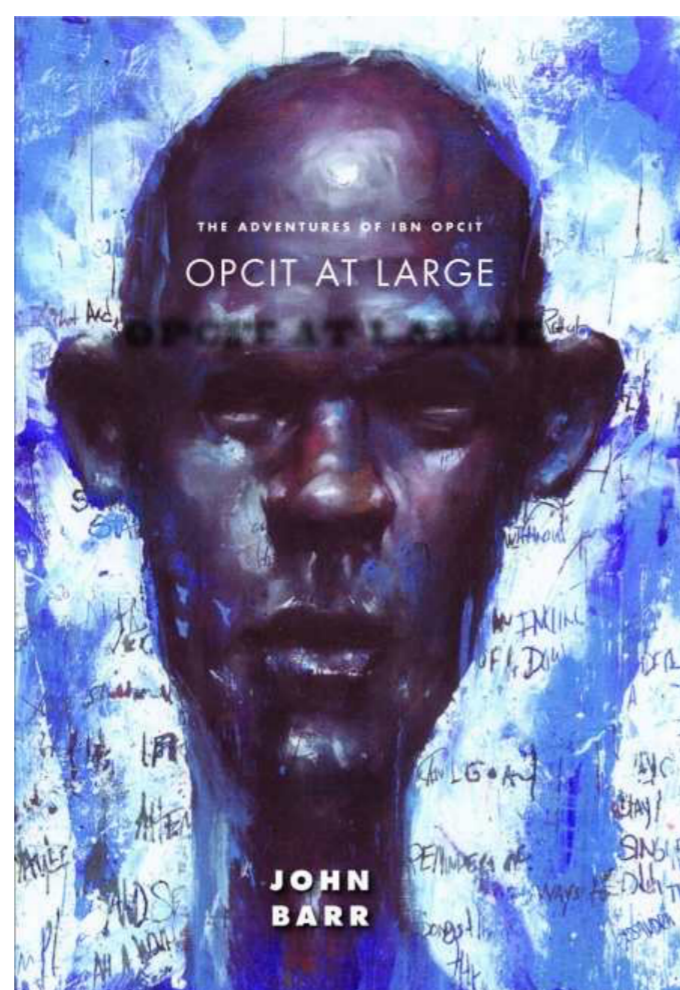




Foreword

REVIEWS OF INDIE BOOKS
SINCE 1998



BUY LOCALLY VIA
BOOKSHOP

BUY ON AMAZON

OPCIT AT LARGE

THE ADVENTURES OF IBN OPCIT, BOOK II

John Barr

Red Hen Press (Feb 1, 2013)

Softcover \$17.95 (144pp)

978-1-59709-259-3

John Barr, writer of epic poems or poetic epics (the poetry-illiterate may not draw a distinction), has returned with Book II of *The Adventures of Ibn Opcit*. This second volume, *Opcit at Large*, mires our eponymous poet-hero in more than a few existential pickles. Play or poem, *Opcit at Large* demands that its reader revisit its engaging monologues many times over.

It all starts in hell with "The Afterdammit." There, two souls encounter their appointed demon. Luckily for them this demon is not necessarily there to torture them for their sins. Before the souls are redeployed to earth to take up new, subsequent lives, the three explore notions of existence and humanism: Indeed, being separated from corporeal life

offers "that rare moment when a man is defined / not by circumstance but by himself alone ... / he can become as great, as gracious or grotesque / as he is able."

Barr's language offers a heady, brain-twisting ride. While doing "the silly slant," one soul was castrated by a sushi knife: "One quick stroke and he held Leviticus aloft; / like a mad postmaster he canceled everything in sight." The other died via bus: "The canonical black I wore was mistaken / by the driver for the entrance to an underpass."

The next segment, "Opcit en Afrique," takes place in "Africa's newest republic," led by an Idi Amin-type (named Idi Nakumbo). There is also a US VP and a CNN reporter (cum Opcit love-interest). Opcit is a rebellious tongue wagging in the wings in the "People's Republic of Usurpia." Meanwhile, the leaders talk outrageous shop about money and geopolitics. Their dialogue becomes a not-so-surreal commentary on the ways of the world.

In "The Last Cosmonaut," Opcit finds himself aloft in a Soviet spacecraft around the time that the USSR has been dissolved back on Earth. His appointed duty? To wax poetic:

Into the little electronic frying pan
Of your Dictaphone pour the ingredients of your day.
Make of your journals a collection agency.
A page a day of pungencies, that's all we ask.

Those enamored of clever turns of phrase will enjoy *Opcit at Large*. The stories are surreal, existential landscapes that beg a second read. Barr is a wizard at wordplay, leaving the reader to sometimes slog, sometimes trip through his dialogue. If sometimes the cleverness of Barr's lines seem to outweigh the meaning, then we are only reminded that this is poetry, after all, and that we are meant to respond with feeling.

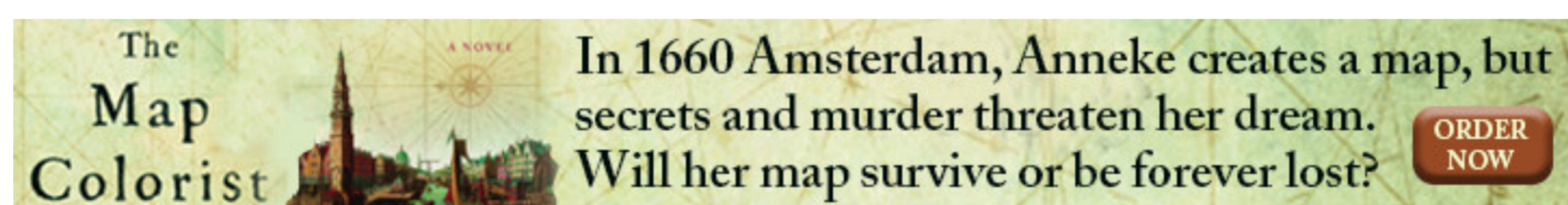
John Barr has published a total of eight collections of poetry. He has taught in the graduate writing program of Sarah Lawrence College and is Board President Emeritus of the Poetry Society of America.

Reviewed by [Leia Menlove](#)

Spring 2013

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.

Share  Copy URL <https://www.forewordrev>



+ LOAD NEXT REVIEW



BOOK REVIEWS

[ALL BOOK REVIEWS](#)

[STARRED REVIEWS](#)

[EDITOR'S PICKS](#)

[NEWEST RELEASES](#)

[CLARION REVIEWS](#)

[BY GENRE](#)

RECOMMENDED FOR YOU

[ABILENE](#)

[PEARL](#)

MOST POPULAR BOOKS

[WHEN DARKNESS DESCENDS](#)

[THE GIRLFRIEND MOM](#)

[TRAINING SCHOOL FOR NEGRO GIRLS](#)

[BY THE RIVERS OF BABYLON](#)

Your email address

This will subscribe you to all of our newsletters, announcements, and promotional content. For more control over what you subscribe to, head on over to [our subscription page](#).



BOOK REVIEWS

ARTICLES & INTERVIEWS

BOOK AWARDS

SUBSCRIBE

ADVERTISING

MARKETING SERVICES

EVENTS

MERCHANDISE

[Log In](#)

[Create an Account](#)

[About Us](#) [Contact Us](#) [Trade Show Catalog](#)

[FAQ](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Terms of Service](#)

[About the Background](#)

© 2023 Foreword Magazine, Inc.
All rights reserved.



FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA