

## LUCKY DARRYL

BY BILL KNOTT and JAMES TATE

(New York: Release Press, 1976. 52 pages, \$3.00)

*Lucky Darryl*, a collaborative “novel” by poets James Tate (*The Lost Pilot, Oblivion Ha-Ha*) and Bill Knott (*The Naomi Poems, Nights of Naomi*) is not properly a novel at all. It’s too short, for one thing. It lacks an identifiable protagonist for another. (Darryl, we’re told

would go door to door,  
through entire neighborhoods,  
and also stop people on the  
street and in supermarkets,  
and show a photo of himself  
to them. ‘Do you recognize  
this man?’ They would all say  
no.)

It has a storyline rather than a plot—Darryl searches for Veronica, catching up with her finally in Brasilia. And there’s a situation where one might reasonably expect a setting:

One day a city newer than Brasilia  
would be built. Then Veronica  
with her entourage of globetrotters  
would leave Brasilia for that  
city. But for now, they and she  
were trapped here. They had  
long ago exhausted all the cities  
of the world, and when Brasilia  
had been erected, they had no choice  
but to come . . . For them this was the  
last city on earth.

I don’t know what *Lucky Darryl* is. It’s too prosaic to be a poem. Too much a poem to be prose. And too much of either to be both. But whatever it is, it’s a joy to read. Knott’s sense of loss and Tate’s of reclamation often come together here in just the right proportion. I can’t remember when I have seen two talents blend so nicely.

*Lucky Darryl* is just, well, a special little book.

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