

CPR

*Resuscitating the art
of Canadian poetry*

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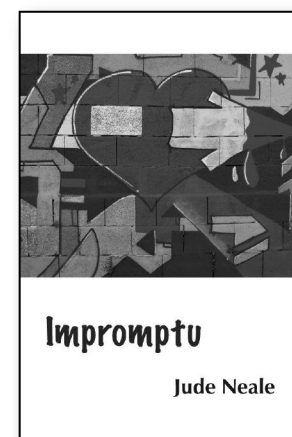
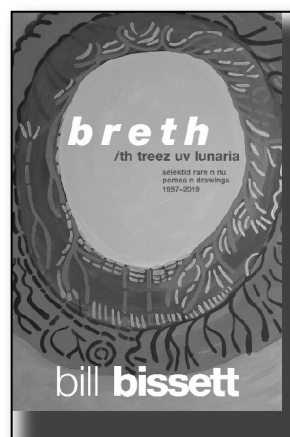
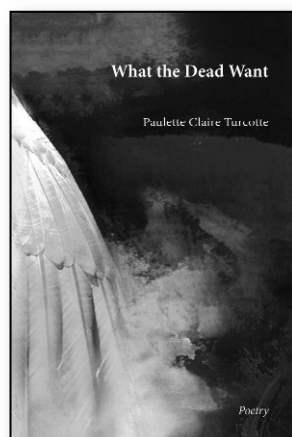
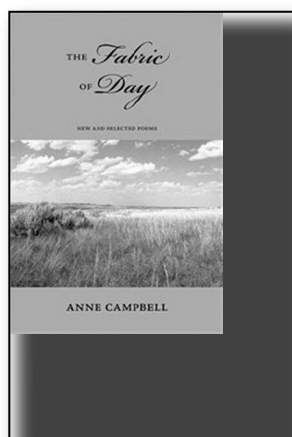
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GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

Len Gasparini

1.

In 2018, I saw by the false dawn's light
the first robin of spring.
It lay on my doorstep. Dead.
If signs are taken for wonders,
what sign was this?

The signs environ us.
As a tellurian of the Anthropocene,
can you not tell the signs
by sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch?
We have damaged Nature with pollution
beyond the point of no solution.
We have created a second Nature
in the image of the first
so as not to believe that we live in paradise.
(From Mother Earth to Earth Mother
to Mother Nature only women know nurture.)
In Nature, nothing is wasted.
Nature is full of surprises.

The signs environ us.
Earth, air, water, fire.
We live, and we suspire.
Acid rain, acid rain, go away,
don't come again another day.
We'll go to the woods no more,
the trees have been clear-cut.

The natural world resides in the rhythms,
variations, and combinations of certain patterns:
the spirals of pine cones, fish scales, seashells;
the zigzags of lightning, the geometry of spiderwebs;
the wavy lines of surf, palm trees grazing the horizons...
Is technology conditioning us
to become an abstraction?
Nobody dances anymore.

For global warming (a buzz word) read GLOBAL
WARNING.
We drove past the first sign years ago
when gasoline and diesel fuel were cheaper.
Climate change: a euphemism
that sounds like a video game.
Earth Day 1970. *We have met the enemy and he is us.*

"The poetry of earth is never dead," said Keats.
"The whole earth is our hospital," said T.S. Eliot.
"The earth is an Indian thing," said Jack.
"Nobody owns the earth," said Bill.
The earth is licking its festering sores.

In a run-down city run by hucksters
there's a nature reserve: Ojibway Park.
Alongside it runs a paved road
notorious for its roadkill.

While we were watching the incoming tide,
a stale, smelly air blew onto the shore
from an ocean polluted with plastic.

Wake up, baby boomers, Generation Xers!
Have you heard the news?
We are rocking the balance of nature.
At the twilight's last gleaming,
your grandchildren will be gasping for oxy-
gen
like herring caught in a gill net.

Being latest in the ascent of life,
from the jellyfish to the mastodon,
it follows that we must be
the least perfect form of life.
(Not *Homo sapiens* but *Homo sap.*)

Life seeks to preserve itself,
but life seeks also to perish.
Do you perceive this chthonic force?
I think the world is one big stomach
fed by tooth and claw
compared with mechanized slaughterhouses
and factory farming.

So far, we've succeeded in polluting
the planet, dooming ourselves
and our creaturely cousins to extinction.
Nothing succeeds like success.
What planet is next?

INTERLUDE

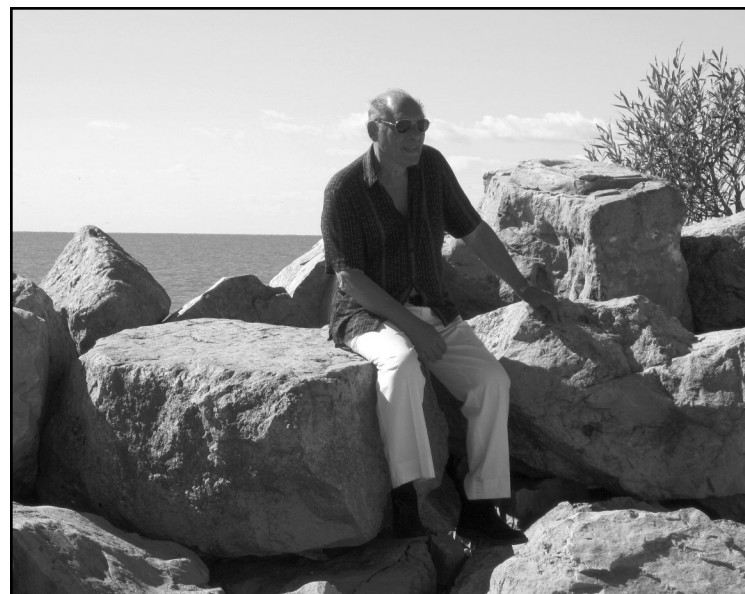
Earth has few secrets from the birds.
From the poles to the tropics,
birds hold us in their spell;
mesmerize us with their music.
If you ever see the skeleton of a bird
you will know how completely it is still flying.

Once upon a Maytime twilight,
in the deepening gloom of a wooded ravine,
I heard the eerie song of the veery
(a songbird seldom seen)
whose liquid, reedy, downward-spiraling sound
resonated as if the bird
carried its own echo within itself.

Approaching the grasslands
near Val Marie, Saskatchewan
for the first time, on foot,
as the day dawned with a cloudless sky,
I saw how time is subordinate
to space, and suddenly I longed to be
that western meadowlark—
a blaze of pure being
perched on a barbed-wire fence,
singing its melodious song.

Mongabay.com June 23rd
FLASH

MORE THAN ONE-THIRD
OF NORTH AMERICA'S NATIVE BIRD SPECIES



Len Gasparini

ARE AT IMMEDIATE RISK OF EXTINCTION

In North America
we live in the shade
of the world's biggest, tallest, and oldest trees.

This is the forest primeval;
and still it is to MacMillan Bloedel—
a tree parasite capable
of dooming British Columbia to a treeless hell. (1997)

I planted a linden sapling.
It will surely outlive me,
though I hope to see
its yellow flowers
attract the first honeybee.
(A flower will do anything
to get pollinated.)

Medieval alchemists
saw the union of opposites
under the symbol
of the linden tree.
(The wind is a tree's only chance
to make music.)

www.greenpeace.org October 24th
FLASH

GLOBAL BANKS FUNDING DESTRUCTION
OF FORESTS

2.

As time and space become compressed,
we seldom socialize in the flesh.
There will be selective breeding;
robot sex dolls for the unchosen;
and for dignitaries: deep freezing
instead of crowded cemeteries.

(continued on page 3)

THE FABRIC OF DAY

Antonio D'Alfonso

This piece should have been written some time ago. And then again no. There is no proper time to write about a book. Books don't come with an expiry date stamped on their covers, as the Industry would like us to believe. There is something dismal about watching book after book slide down the funnel of forgetfulness, oblivion.

Anne Campbell's collection, *The Fabric of Day*, is not one we will soon forget. Individual books are salvos sent and salvos received. Selected Poems and Collected Poems are treasure troves for readers to return to when they need to converse with the author face to face; these collections are important not so much for their offerings of memorabilia as much as the secrets made public through and in between the lines that unfold throughout the years composing a poet's career (if career is the proper term to use when speaking of a poet).

Campbell introduces her book as though her work formed some kind of emotional diary kept during her intellectual journey. She mentions the presence of recurring images in her selection: there are images and phrases that reappear in the most unexpected places.

Considering that the voyage begins in 1983 and ends around 2017, it is not surprising that Anne Campbell returns to the sentimental spots and literary spaces she feels most comfortable in.

In 'The Beginning', she writes: 'My body is my soul the place where spirits enter and rest. My body is my beginning, spirit enfleshed'. I told myself, 'Ok, with such terms this poetry is a spiritual journey.' And yet in the poem 'The God of Encounter', she reminds us that 'It was not mystical, the experience...'

Concluding that these poems do not constitute a theological adventure, that is, Anne Campbell might hint at spirituality or religion sparingly, ultimately these themes are not her main concern, the readers must then turn their attention to her echoes and duplications, as the poet herself confesses in her introductory note.

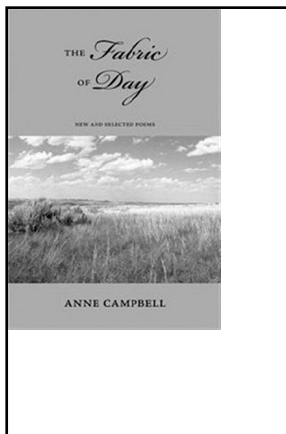
Substantially the shape of the poems can be divided into three categories: prose poetry, flush-left short verse, and dancing lines swaying through identifications of various lengths. What is expected rarely occurs. The semantics are non-linear. The rhythmic scat is dyslexic. The lines reflect a nervous imagination. 'The well//draws me//knowledge//to the fall'.

This fall, the break from what was (the immigrant avowal: Croatian, babushka) to what is. And what is? 'What is this/constant memory/what metaphor is here//memory of an absence//no memory of a move//...I absent myself/absinthe myself//falling//letting go//One (that one would be me)/to find the part of oneself felt/missing/feeling the self, one used to be//gone//absence as a clearing//being with the stranger I am//becoming.'

The above is a combination of words and lines extracted from thirty-four years of writing. The result is telling. Reiteration, recurrence, echolalia, of course, but there is also interrelatedness, progression, cohension.

'Time reminds//she is there//the fabric/of day.'

This sudden appearance of strands recalls Philippe Haeck's image of *Nattes*, the



*The Fabric of Day:
New and Selected
Poems*
Anne Campbell
Thistledown Press,
2017



Anne Campbell

first book Haeck wrote in the early 1970s, and which I read and then translated in the mid-1980s, when I first met Anne Campbell. This is not name dropping. I wish to acknowledge the origin of this metaphor for texts viewed as fabric, weaves, mat, plaits.

Anne Campbell has woven words and verse into a material that demonstrates the becoming of self. Now this is surely unique. After three decades of poetry many would expect to find at the end of the book the focused portrait of a poet. Anne Campbell, the agile weaver, whispers that this is not so. The fabric remains fragile, and the mending never completed. The work is on-going, never-ending.

Antonio D'Alfonso is a Canadian writer, editor, publisher, and filmmaker, and was also the founder of Guernica Editions.

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG (continued from page 2)

The Bible, the Torah, the Koran—
the vain anthropocentrism of man.
Do we need myths? Should these bones live?
The computer runs algorithms
but the psyche's still primitive.

Reality is said to begin
outside verbal language.
I suspect that mathematicians know this.
The theorems of mathematics prove it.
Digit. Digital. Digital divide. Can you dig it?
It is the imaged word, the word as art
that produces form, which derives from color...
A rose is not a rose unless you know
how many petals it has.

Let us look at Michelangelo's fresco:
The Creation of Adam—an anthropocentric myth
of its time, in which the forefingers
of two reclining figures almost touch...
(At the zoo one day, I proffered a grape
to an anthropoid ape.
I was amazed at how gently he took it
with his thumb and forefinger).

As the twig is bent, so grows the tree,
as the saying goes—or, genetically,
to codify, modify, manipulate
the double helix, and dice with fate—
or, gladly, to embrace *Amor fati*,
or to accept the concept of *esho funi*.

Warriors will war with warriors
via high-tech weaponry.
(What is history? Read further:
the justification of mass murder.)
Workers will work like worker bees and ants.
Breeders will breed, as if by blind will,
incapable of cognition...

What lives is something other than what thinks.
We have stepped out of Nature
and into the heart of darkness
which is Absolute Reality.

Len Gasparini is the author of numerous books and chapbooks of poetry, five short-story collections, two children's books, and a one-act play. He now resides in his hometown of Windsor, Ontario.

WHAT THE DEAD WANT

Krysia Jopek

The poems in *What the Dead Want*, Paulette Claire Turcotte's debut full-length book of poetry, are richly multi-textured; gathering a chorus of disparate, often disassociated voices that span ancient times through contemporary experience: the ghosts of the dead, the poet's own personal, emotional vision and transcription of the material and spiritual world. In this stunning 168-page book of poetry, literary and visual artist Turcotte weaves her poems together in three sections, "Remembering and Forgetting," "Letters from the Asylum," and "Songs of Love and Death." Her hauntingly beautiful visual art adorns the book's cover and interlaces the three sections, or "movements," of poetry. All is present in the articulation of the absent, the lost, the abandoned, those in pain, those who no longer have a voice. *What the Dead Wants* offers the reader a eulogistic experience of witnessing the dead, the death in life, our coming to terms with our own mortality and spiritual identities; the essential reclaiming of the immortality of our souls that art makes possible.

Turcotte dedicates the collection of poems to her two deceased grandmothers and to Sister Kathleen Lyons, a Jungian analyst. The poems are in conversation with them, with all the dead, with history, and with the living, those who are left with their memories of the dead and the knowledge of the transitory nature of our conscious experience in the material world. The poems also inhabit the unconscious world, the Jungian collective unconscious, and the reality of dreams. The stunning preface to "Part One: Remembering and Forgetting," written in prose poetry ends:

When the waves smack the rock, there is a precise moment, just before the wave turns back on itself, that is like the moment of death. It is like the death between the inbreath and outbreath, that split second when there is no breath, where the breath is deciding whether it will stay or go. That is what humans feel and this is what gives them anguish. There is an ancient memory in humans that is connected to this ebbing and flowing. All life comes and goes here. This is why I love the sea. It gives and takes. It arrives, and leaves. // As lovers do. (15)

What the Dead Want also pays homage to the kinetic life of language, a presence in our consciousness, a medium that is native, ancestral, cultural—yet foreign at times; meanings are often cloudy, obfuscated by resonant, subjective language and linguistic, poetic construction. The poetic prose preface of "Letters from the Asylum" begins with "the Harvesting of Words: verbs, nouns, speech, lexes, lanugae, graffiti—yes" (67). In this middle section of Turcotte's triptych, the poet meditates on language, the poet's medium, and the making of art, literary and visual. In the third section of the poem "things that do not happen," Turcotte writes of "light" that "spreads quickly—a touch equivalent to language, rolled away from my recollection and dropped into the fog of distant memory, this was madness, eating holes in my flesh" (21).

The theme of madness is threaded through the book. Section 10 of "Benediction (30 days in the asylum)" reads, "I am a muscle, an eel, a fish, I am a heart, a woman / the lunatic forum for the marginalized" (81). The persona of *What the Dead Want*, though lyrical is not merely the personal "I" of the poet; the identity of the poet, as evidenced in these lines. Throughout the sequence of poems, the identity of the poem shifts, taking on many forms to speak on behalf of the dead, the mad, the marginalized, those burdened with sorrows, laden with age and memory. In "visions at the edge of time," the persona proclaims,

I am a blind woman entering the landscape at sunrise,
reaping a harvest of light. Against all this, there is a sanctified
plentitude, a eucharist, nefarious gods dizzy with mead, running
through the catacombs of the heart where the saints are still in hiding.
and the dark angel still squats over the lava fields. (137)

Questions also figure prominently in *What the Dead Want*; the poet asking the

reader provocative, open-ended questions. "Part One: Remembering and Forgetting" ends with, "what happened in the garden? / what of the sleeping child? / will she waken? / will she remember her name?" (64). In "the voice," the poet asks

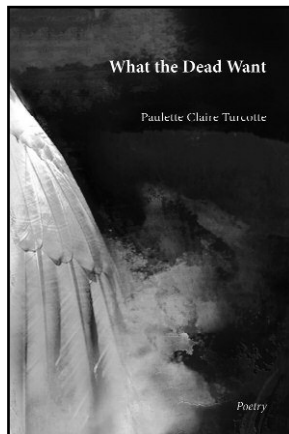
and who counts the exiles, wanderers, the maimed and cornered,
the hungry, who counts the children drowned at sea
who, who names them, who marks their watery graves,
who counts the dead children in the cold cities, the northern
provinces, dead by their own hand

what is the color of hope
of absence (90)

In the third section of *What the Dead Want*, "Songs of Love and Death," the persona attests, "there is no / forgetting, and memory waxes brilliant, what is it to ask water for life/ of the saviours of God? And words, words pulled from the dark/ become a clear and intimate rite" (120). This "rite," the reader's experience of the poem that unfolds in time like music, is the rite of passage that ends with aesthetic catharsis, spiritual awakening.

What the Dead Want offers readers a beautiful, yet haunting read; an experience of the sublime rendered in the poet's medium of language, woven with the language and imagery of dream, memory, and emotional experience. Turcotte gives voice to the dead, the missing, the marginalized, those filled with sorrow and terror who struggle to create hope through art. It's a beautiful collection of poems that leaves the reader wanting to see what Turcotte publishes next.

Krysia Jopek is the Founding Editor of Diaphanous Press and the author of *Maps and Shadows* and *Hourglass Studies*.



What the Dead Want
Paulette Claire Turcotte
Ekstasis Editions, 2019

BILL'S *BRETH*: TENDING THE WILD

Scott Lawrance

"At some point I would be intrigued about how wildness was also secreted in language, and a way back to the village began to form in my heart." – Martin Shaw

At last count, bill bissett has published about 74 books (at least according to "th kreetshurs who live between realms uv consciousness say 74 n thos xcelent beings dew alot uv work like that.") So the recent publication of *breth/th treez uv lunaria: selected rare n nu poems n drawings 1957-2019* (2019, Talonbooks) functions as an excellent compilation of bill's work over the past six decades!!! Feel free to imagine this text as Volume One of a *collected works of bill bissett*, a possibility contemplated and currently hibernating. The range of this publication ensures that any effort to respond will be partial.

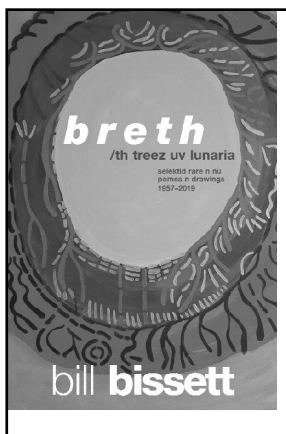
The first poem in the book gives some way in to a possible theme: "mor thn i evr realized at first breth had i/ bin heer b4 that was my qwestyuning/ feeling". This remarkable collection makes a space in which we find ourselves again, re-membered, returned again to an animated cosmos, revealed by and shaped by both word and image. (I am reminded of Duncan's line, "often I am permitted to return to a meadow".) Interestingly, while the work has a universal, even "kosmic" feel, it is also quintessentially Canadian, inhabited by moose, raven, and a distinctly northern bestiary, informed by decades of travel and life in both cities, towns and back-country of this nation.

bill takes some effort to point out that this collection developed "organically", as befits work that largely eschews the grammatical-syntactic and lyrical flavour of much current writing. It is not constructed, "chronological 4 me ths way creates a mor fluid flow uv th pomes n let th pomes speak 4 themselves not thru organizing labels or categoreez let th labeling bring othr offrings all th guiding lites." Unlike most "collected works", which proceed according to a definite order, usually chronological by either date of creation or publication, *breth* presents a vast corpus of work that is organized much differently. (Although the interested reader or scholar can readily track the exact original source of book, magazine, or recording in the thorough "archive" appendix of the text.) This "organic" presentation is analogous in many ways to the work contained herein.

In terms of style and method, bill's practice differs significantly from that of poet and cultural anthropologist, Gary Snyder, the work of both seems grounded in a notion of "the wild." As Snyder puts it in his essay, "The Etiquette of Freedom", a definition of wild comes close to a description of the Chinese notion of *Tao*: "eluding analysis, beyond categories, self-organizing, playful, surprising, impermanent, insubstantial, independent, complete, orderly, unmediated, freely manifesting, self-authenticating, self-willed, complex, quite simple. Both empty and real at the same time. In some cases we might call it sacred."

There exists a strong synchrony between this "East Asian" complex and the works gathered together here – a wonderful collection of a wide range of works – forms with which bill has conversed: poems, concrete poems, drawings, and sound poems. (We miss his music and painting!) In conversation recently (with myself and Cathy Ford) bill was adamant that he was always (!) both a poet and a painter.

The volume offers excellent opportunity to witness and track both the lineages which bill honours and the many dialogues and conversations with fellow explorers of language and image, ranging from the sound poetry of Dadaists like Kurt Schwitters and Hugo Ball, the concrete poetry of bp Nichol, John Furnival and Ian Hamilton Finlay (his



breth / th treez uv lunaria: selected rare n nu poems n drawings 1957-2019
bill bissett
Talonbooks, 2019



bill bissett

significant contribution both in Canada and internationally deserves fuller treatment), the bop prosody and spontaneous prose of Jack Kerouac, the magical symbolism of Lamantia, the "continuous nerve movies" of Philip Whalen, the mammal physicality and eroticism of Michael McClure, the cut-ups and fold-ins of Burroughs and Gyson, and the "first thought, best thought" of Ginsberg and Trungpa, and of course, fellow visionary, poet/painter William Blake! This volume will surely be of assistance in supporting a fuller treatment of such correspondences in the future.

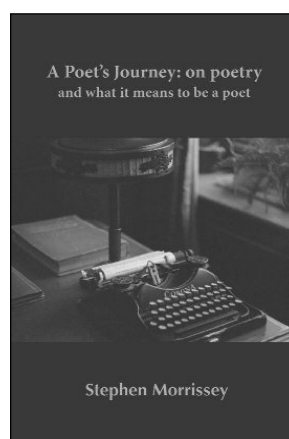
In an interview, bill once recounted how various professors counselled bill on the importance of finding "his voice", which would enable him to become a poet of significance. In reply, he explained that he had five or six of them and wasn't about to marginalize any of them. Some poems feature a single voice, yet one of the great pleasures of this text is the opportunity it provides to notice, revel in, and celebrate the simultaneity and continuity of this community of "voices", some of which speak in languages unknown and mysterious. Reading his work (and perhaps even more so) or hearing bill read, we see/hear these voices emerging. The calligraphy of the poems on the page also engages us, inviting a complexity of bodily response in a rebuttal of a standard and unchanging orientation to the typed page.

To enter the field of the text is a journey of decentering. The poet, "maker", is no longer a central, ordering principle, refusing in multiple ways an imperial position. bill's stance in relation to what he hears when he listens, is at once respect, and awe; his openness to the world reveals the intertwine of the erotic and sacred. bill, while touted as an unconventional poet, is nevertheless a very traditional servant of Eros, of love in all its guises and we find, running within and beneath these poems, a current of loss, of longing, a search for true and lasting relationships, with all the attendant joy and grief. The human realm is a wild one, inter-being with all of the flesh of the world. This work tends the wilderness, offering a path and a practice to return us to "the body where we were born".

Listening/hearing: respectfully responding.
Calling th spirits in feedin th spirits
With what they love song nd th things of our fingers
Calling for their help now & giving them food that's all
Its evur bin about.

Scott Lawrance continues work on epic Turtle Island while trying to find how to stand on the shifting sands of the Anthropocene.

New from Ekstasis Editions



A Poet's Journey:
On poetry
and what it means
to be a poet

Stephen Morrissey

Writing from a poet's perspective, Morrissey discusses the influence of older poets who act as mentors; the poet friends of one's youth; poets whose books influence one's own work; and the varied experiences of life that are important to the development of the poet's writing. The art of poetry includes ideas about poetry; poetry as the voice of the human soul; visionary poetry; the purpose of experimental poetry; confessional poetry; and finding an authentic voice in poetry. The essays in this book are the culmination of a lifetime of thinking about what it means to be a poet and the art of poetry.

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Non-fiction
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5.5 x 8.5
\$23.95

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www.ekstasiseditions.com ekstasis@islandnet.com

OF LIGHT: JUDE NEALE'S *IMPROMPTU*

Cynthia Sharp

Jude Neale encouraged me to write with her through National Poetry Month and I caught the fever, her own original prompts the ones that flowed most easily. Like the collage of hearts and stars on the cover, *Impromptu* is an explosion of everyday love and being. Neale is sunlight from the inside out, the rhythms of daily life in the direction of devotion.

Love imbued in her biorhythms, Neale breaks open another ethereal collection filled with imagery, strength and surprise. An intriguing Baldwin quote opens the book, setting readers in a blissful Zen state from which creativity emerges. As poems build on each other, Neale endows us with the wisdom that we may choose how to live this one ephemeral life. Diction like “confabulation” and “gloaming” permeates the narration, making the visceral accessible and concrete. She names light, giving it form, presence and permission:

“The shadows lengthen
until I can hold
the whole world softly
in my out stretched arms.”

Neale confounds beyond wonder until all who choose are within her radiant reach. She ends poems with profound questions that give beyond the border and scope of the piece to alight into the great beyond, love of the universe. Like a Paulo Coelho vision, “The Promise” resonates with such eloquent metaphor and strong surrealism that the audience believes in her reverie:

“If she is the wind
can he be the hollow flute

echoing back her urgent song?”

In pieces like “Shelter,” the poet not only possesses keen insight into human nature, but plays with the elevation of collective consciousness, the turns in her poems an elixir for transcendence, her stargazing elevating culture into healing veneration of the young, existentialism for the spirit.

“Your ice blue eyes
watch without judgement...

Sleep my child -

nothing matters more
than this peace you carry.”

Neale validates our collective veneration of the children we’re privileged to care for, those who will live on after us, perhaps with the tiny rhythms of our adulation to pass on to future generations beyond themselves, capturing how a grandchild is more magical than anyone gone before. Her last stanzas play with the meaning of so many types of rest, of permanence and impermanence. With honesty and openness, Neale embraces the finite nature of individual human life, manifesting meaning beyond mere acceptance in her deeply kind, immeasurable presence:

“I am here to hold your tears
so you can rest,

and I can uncertainly follow.”

As Neale expands the ordinary into the eternal, one is reminded of Rilke’s lines in the *Duino Elegies*, where he says:

“Once for each thing. Just once; no more. And we too,
just once. And never again. But to have been

this once, completely, even if only once:
to have been at one with the earth, seems
beyond undoing.”

Like Rilke providing a fulfilling experience of completion from which we can let go, Neale is not afraid to directly acknowledge truth, then bend it into new light. “Changes” is my favourite poem in the book, the way it gets inside the reader and uplifts in exquisite imagery, appealing to all the senses at once:

“If the dying earth was carpeted with
A bright pallet of wild flowers
And the waters sang with whales
It would be enough for me to dress in
white to marry the world again,”

then journeys from a land of wildflowers and clean, calm air to delicate purity:

“If I could I would change it all
I would leave luminosity and light where my feet had trodden.”

Neale is herself a wildflower. Through her evocative words we breathe in how we always wanted to live and give ourselves permission to be who we always were:

“If I lost my voice I would learn to give with my hands
I would fashion bracelets of gold
To show you my shimmering tune”

Alliteration flows with the cadence of oceans in lines like “show you my shimmering tune” and “flourish in the bowered bed,” an image reminiscent of Titania, pure of heart. “Waters sang with whales,” Neale writes, the rise and fall of lines a thrilling ride on a turbulent sea, a reminder of all there still is to dream and create, all that lies within our imagination, her subtle use of poetic devices a beautiful lilt in her multi-layered flower imagery.

In “Gratitude,” Neale embraces the wisdom of having lived, still open to the new:

“I will sing

Puccini’s Madame Butterfly
to the green and patient lake.”

We ascend in each of her generous visions, floating above reality to possibilities in reach. She’s dreamed them to us so we may taste their visceral deliciousness “again and again,” every line alight with symbolism from the inside out.

“The Gift” is another remedy of life experience teaching one how to see:

“the Love you have scattered
Like birdseed.”

Neale replenishes us to wholeness with concrete images of the eternal in our finite lives.

The collection is not without playfulness. “A Okay” reveals the poet’s sense of humour, while “The True Story of Otherworldly Matters” brings home the uplifting theme of transmutation.

“I had been visited by his grace
And I believed for the first time

In the unknowable practise
of the human spirit.”



Jude Neale



Impromptu
Jude Neale
Ekstasis Editions
92 pages
2019

My other favourite in the collection is written from Neale’s own inviting prompt, “Add a day to any month.” I can taste the nasturtiums, floating through wild flowers and magic realism with the narrator.

In poems like “The Chrysalis,” Neale finds personal meaning in tiny places and brings them to the womb of the whole.

She excels in a variety of genres, from free verse to form poetry. Crafted with juxtaposition, her haiku suggests subaqueous depth in only seventeen syllables, speaking to the power of chemistry:

“Faint-hearted lover
Don’t stop yearning for thunder
It waits like a pearl”

Prompt 26 offers another glimpse of love, rare and mature, carried with a unique allusion to Methuselah’s 969 years, the longest life recorded in the bible:

“But I’m patient as Methuselah.

“Don’t mind waiting
for the ripe perfection of you.”

She continues to explore the ebb and flow of decades of marriage in “Safe Harbour:”

“I thought love was something shiny

And not this burnished light
That joins us like steel”

The collection is resplendent with reflections on love:

“It smells like tangerines...

I am grateful
as a field to rain”

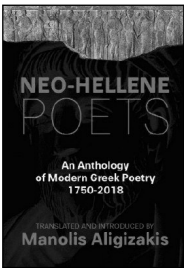
as Neale leaves us with tangible images that build seamlessly on each other:

“From the leafy canopy
Where there’s hardly a sound,”

our yearning to dwell in the sky.

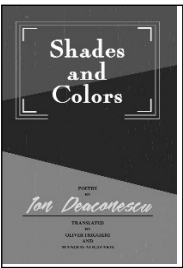
By producing *Impromptu*, Neale shows by example that a daily writing practice, whether for National Poetry Month or as a way of being, is simply a matter of doing it, even when it scares you, even when you’re stuck. Her prompts carry writers like a mountain stream, immersing us in her voice and trusting us to speak our own. *Impromptu* is a poet’s gentle companion, permission to be our own authentic selves. Readers are left floating in the air, high on poetry, creative space opening before them, surrendering to the call to write. Ideal for high school, college and university language arts classrooms, as well as community workshops.

Cynthia Sharp is the author of *Rainforest in Russet* (Silver Bow Publishing, 2018) and *The Light Bearers in the Sand Dollar Graviton* (Sweetgrass in the Wind, 2018). She is a full member of the League of Canadian Poets and on the executive of the Federation of BC Writers.



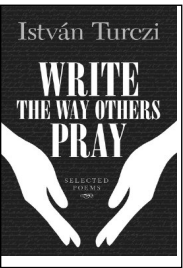
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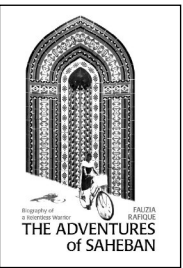
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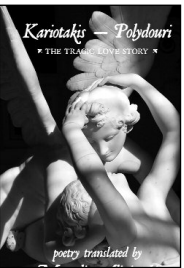
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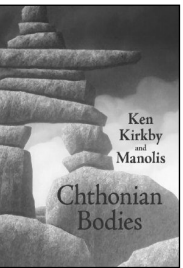
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