

News from the Feminist Caucus, by Anne Burke

Join us, in Winnipeg, on Saturday, May 31st, 2 p.m.-3:30 p.m. for The Feminist Caucus Panel and Business Meeting (at the League-joint meeting with The Writers Union). This month, Institute for Women's and Gender Studies (University of Winnipeg), news from Magie Dominic on *Street Angel*. Reviews of *Flowers We Will Never Know The Names Of: long poem*, by Cathy Ford; *Radio Weather*, by Shoshanna Wingate; ; *Afterletters*, by R. Kolewe. *Regenerations/Régénération: Canadian Women's Writing/Écriture des femmes au Canada*.

The dates for the Winnipeg League National Poetry Festival (joint with the Writers Union of Canada) will be Thursday, May 28th to Sunday, May 31st, 2015. The Feminist Caucus Panel and Business Meeting will be on Saturday May 30th, 2 p.m.- 3:30 p.m.

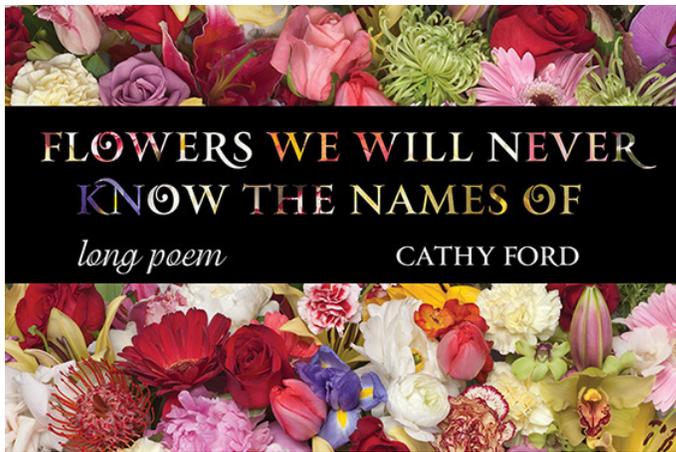
Sonja Greckol agreed to organize next year's Feminist Caucus Panel on "Canadian Women Poets and their Female Mentors", a companion volume to: *Dialogues, Exchanges, Conversations, Female Poets and Their Male Mentors*. Susan McMaster and Lesley Strutt are co-editing Poems from the Feminist Caucus, by both men and women, a third title in the popular anthology series. For full report: <http://poets.ca/programs-2/feminist-caucus/>

<http://www.iwgs.ca/> Fostering collaborative feminist work, research, art, and activism

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IWGS is a working partner of the Department of Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Winnipeg. We strive to develop the creative and transformative potential of the university, community and society through removing barriers to, and promoting the exchange of, knowledge between the institution and its communities. IWGS practices and fosters participation in collaborative feminist work, research and activism.

"Now is the time to refuse to be among the silenced. To say, I am a feminist. To stand up in order to prevent the silence once again to fall." (Women Against Violence Against Women, Nov. 21, 1994).



Review of *Flowers We Will Never Know The Names Of: long poem*, by Cathy Ford (Salt Spring Island B.C.: Mother Tongue Press, 2014) 83 pp. paper.

In memoriam, for the fourteen women who died. There are the names of the thirteen other women injured that day and the names of the nineteen on a list in the murderer's packet which remain to be remembered. What occurred on the morning of Dec. 6, 1989, at L'Ecole Polytechnique has become known as the Montreal Massacre. Ford confides that she has found the language of flowers, a female tradition from Victorians, Turkish, and Arabian women has stimulated her poetry and given her poetic relief in self-expression. In contrast with journalese of placing the perpetrator at the centre of consciousness, examining his unhappy childhood, and probing his history for rational explanation about a supremely irrational acts, Ford prefers to never speak of him, especially mentioning his name, an identifier which is basically unreliable. Of course a woman who has spawned him may express her hatred in this moment and that, before letting go of any hope she may have concealed in her heart. Ford's exuberance cannot be contained. As she says that she seeks to reclaim the rant, against all that is negative, life-defying, and horror, in doing so, love of other women affirms never giving up. The lessons of resilience, tenacity, weaving remembrances into a garland serves to shore up our alphabet dance. In idea, art, concept, intellect, in nature. The celebration and the challenge. Her poems borrow the robes of dynamic, breathing, living language.

Ford, as a founder of the Feminist Caucus of the League of Canadian Poet cannot help but allude to Pat Lowther. Her bloody Vancouver marriage mattress had been found after her murderous death. And yet another woman,

"I will never forget her bruised, exhausted face turning to the sunlight, her children's bodies draped like long-stemmed roses over her arms."

Vancouver's Women's Monument Project is intended to make a better world in memory of "all women who have been murdered by men" is both a promise and a prayer. Ford rejects silence. She articulates the anniversary date with lit candles in paper boats off Mayne Island B.C. She is a prominent League member, the Writers Union, and PEN Canada.

Postscript

oct.15, 2014:

<http://metronews.ca/news/canada/1183798/montreal-massacre-threats-force-feminist-media-critic-anita-sarkeesian-to-cancel-lecture>

Canadian feminist and media critic Anita Sarkeesian has been forced to cancel a lecture in Utah after an anonymous threat promised a 'Montreal Massacre-style attack' if the event went forward.

"When USU and Utah police refused to screen attendees for firearms, citing the state's concealed carry laws, I was forced to cancel the event. Below is a round up of media interviews I have done recently speaking about the threats in Utah, the epidemic of gendered harassment online, and the larger problem of sexism within the games industry as a whole."

Sarkeesian — whose [Feminist Frequency](#) blog critiques how women are portrayed in popular culture and video games — was set to speak at Utah State University Wednesday evening. However, school officials received a threatening email Monday, vowing to carry out a mass shooting unless the lecture was cancelled.

According to the [Standard Examiner](#) in Ogden, Utah, the threats directly referenced [the 1989 shooting at Montreal's École Polytechnique](#).

From Magie Dominic: her newest article on the Caffè Cino/NYC in the sixties, "The Caffè Cino: Lanford Wilson, Bette Midler and Everyone in Between", can now be accessed at <http://shar.es/1mc1C4>

STREET ANGEL

www.magiedominic.blogspot.com

[Magie Dominic at Lincoln Center Archives](#)

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In a copy of "New York Review of Books" this week, Oct. 21. *Street Angel* was on page 27 - announcing "New Books From University Presses".



Review of *Radio Weather*, by Shoshanna Wingate (Montreal: Vehicle Press, 2014) forthcoming, from proofs.

In "Radio Weather", the poet acknowledges "Weather serves up//memory better than any book" playfully introducing the central paradox of art and nature. I was reminded of "The Weather" by Lorna Crozier and also the inevitable comparisons with Robert Kroetsch, especially the departure point of "Our stories, though,/ tell us who we are."

The urban landscape is at the mercy of personified instruments of torture. Pigeons behave "like fighter pilots". The lowly crocus "in their purple hats." The lack of adaptation applies to inappropriate planting as much as how "The City Dwellers", ignorant of their surroundings, nevertheless yearn for fresh blooms and strive for survival.

The fog is "tendrilly", its fleece or personalizing "my light" as "white, not soup thick, with teeth." It feels as though each season is awaiting "wings for its entrance." Even the currents' intention is compared with a lighthouse, "its silence" as sentinel of the embracing harbour.

A costume change is in order for days, in keeping with the theatrical theme. Old world is contingent on the new, "hills like pillows, handkerchief gulls." There is effectiveness in the sibilant alliteration of "sand", "sirens", "sunrise", "sea spits", and "shoals."

In Part Two, the child's eye-view is enrobed with "chirps", "moss", and "ferns". Nostalgia overcomes melancholy, "monster". The industrial mill renders patients dying of lung disease. The culture of poverty has reinforcements from Church. There were "crippled ghost children". A ringmaster controls a playground, among butts and empty bottles. Family photos are evocative but ultimately unsuccessful images. Another mother provides a symbolic double, who reveals the differences rather than similarities. The elder has a cautionary story. Love will overcome the deficiencies of age. An additional example of poetic dexterity is the series: "sheets", "stir", "shriek", "strange", "stranger", and finally "sleeping", in an economy of image.

In part Three, the poet draws on correspondence sent to her father, who from 1969-1972 was a counsellor in New York City for the War Resister's League. For the most part, these are found or documentary poems relying on contexts and juxtaposition. "Your almost child" refers to the poet's birth a month later in April, 1971.

In part Four, the death sentence is contemplated, along with "old Smokey". The Caretakers are a medical necessity but devoutly to be missed. "AIDS Ward, San Francisco" personalizes the epidemic, dying, vacant-ness of then almost always fatal illness. Being indiscrete enough to even mention or whisper the true causative agent, because "Words are power" and especially in their absence.

An archaic lynching is ironically marked by a souvenir postcard. The poet's treatment of The Dead resembles T.S. Eliot's "Hollow Men". She chooses a life over the mind which is compatible with theirs, as well as practicing self-censorship. Her body opens itself to suckling a child, as biologically natural, as giving birth.



Review of *Regenerations/Régénération: Canadian Women's Writing/Écriture des femmes au Canada* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2014) 310 pp. paper.

These are revised versions of papers delivered at the Canadian Women Writers Conference, held at the University of Alberta, in fall 2010. The result is a collection of eleven essays in English and five in French. The wide-ranging topics include, but are not limited to, Canadian women's writing in relation to literary history and digital scholarship, multicultural and bilingual in scope. (Previous conferences were pre-digital).

Nicole Brossard offers “Au fil de la narration et des générations, Le livre, Internet, Facebook et Twitters; la mémoire, elles, notre mémoire. She relates a narrative about the Dinner Party of Judy Chicago, 1986 *SP/Elles, Poetry by Canadian Women, A Mazing Space, Le partage du savoir, des pensées, des émotions, des histoires; les arbres de connaissances, quelques atouts des arbres de connaissances, Générations. la partie invisible, la question du sens.*”

Andrea Beverly, author of “Grounds for Telling It: Transnational Feminism and Canadian Women's Writing”, dissertation Université de Montréal, 2010. print, is mentioned in passing. She is our contact for digitization of the Living Archives Series published by the Feminist Caucus, League of Canadian Poets.

Susan Rudy contributed “Women Who Invite Collaboration”, on Caroline Bergvall, Erin Moure, et.al. She is on leave from the University of Calgary, her research on the connections between feminist theory and women's lives. Now she is focused on Women Rhodes Scholars' Work-Life Identity Narratives.

In regard to the Rhodes Scholar and my intended application, some years ago, to the Dean of Arts for the Rhodes Scholarship, I was matter-of-factly informed that “You cannot apply”. Not understanding, I politely pursued my request, with a self-effacing: “I am applying all over, but I don't expect to be selected”. He replied, without missing a beat, “No, you're a woman, and

the Rhodes Scholar is only for a man”. It felt as if I had the breath knocked out of me. I returned to my sequestered carrel at the main library and struggled to collect my thoughts.

New research locates a genealogy of transnational feminist thought in Canadian women’s writing. One aspect is the centrality of collaborative theory and practice, whether or not transhistorical. Within the innovative women’s writing communities, a single text but plural authors may be marked by co-authorship or co-signature of a work of art. Remember Woolf’s imagined female reader.

I hope to learn more about “The Tolerance Project”. For now, I should mention a co-edited issue of Calgary’s *Dandelion Magazine* (now defunct) which was the 2011 Mapping issue to dislocate our expectations. There was also Erin Moure’s *Sheep’s Vigil by a Fervent Person* (2001) a “translation” and spelling her name “Eirin”, *The Poetics of Relation*. The lines between (among) author, translator, and reader can no longer be clearly delineated. (p. 31) Compare this to “Afterletters” (see: review which follows).

The present collection was produced by the University of Alberta Libraries, the University of Alberta Press, CWRC, and the CLC. The inaugural conference of the Canadian Writing Research Collaboratory (www.cwrc.canada) was hosted by the Canadian Writing Research Centre/Centre de la littérature canadienne, at the University of Alberta.

The project will use digital writing, with aims of participation, partnership, and collaboration, focused on major projects, such as the Editing Modernism in Canada Project, or the Canadian Women’s Writing Project, to promote connections between texts and for crossing generations.

The Orlando Project serves Feminist Literary Studies, converting them from analog formats, at the University of Alberta Libraries, for The Education and Research Archive (ERA). The goals are the future accessibility and preservation of research. This approach allows print publishing, combined with digital dissemination, of continuing scholarship.

By employing strategies to ensure ways computers can continue to process, it will be prove possible to capture materials from various contributors, bio-critical profiles of writers, bibliographies, readers and critical responses, patterns in publishing and/or poetics.

Part II "Back to the Future": Rosemary Sullivan, in "Reclaiming the Past, Nurturing the Future", describes herself as a biographer of Carolyn Smart "a saga of romantic obsession" ("The Muse: His and Hers", *A Bonus*). Sullivan also produced a biography of Gwendolyn MacEwen, in *Shadow Maker*. She mentions that Margaret Atwood was a female student who was not permitted to work at Lamont Library (Harvard) although she attended Radcliffe (for women). This incident echoes Virginia Woolf, who required special permission to give her invited talk to a room of men on campus. Sullivan produced the third in a trilogy of literary biographies.

Marie Carrière, "Du métaféminisme et des histoires au féminin", contains an epigraph from Terry Eagleton, *After Theory*. There are other papers on "Gothic Romance in Quebec, Engaging English and French in Nineteenth-Century English-Canadian Fiction by Women", by Lindsey McMaster. "Readers Reading Margaret Laurence, 1965-1980", by Cinda Gault, explores: "National and Female Identities Together", "Laurence, Realism, and Identity, 1965-1980"; "Laurence, Romance, and Identity, 1965-1980", "Contradictions of National and Female Identities: Two Communities Collide? "

Part III "Des Contextes Minoritaires", deals with "être écrivaine en contexte minoritaire franco-canadien" (1970-1985), Lucie Hotte: "Tour d'horizon: le contexte sociopolitique des années 1970-1985 et son influence sur l'horizon d'attente; archéologie de l'écriture des femmes en Ontario franc(s)ais (1970-1985)"; les oeuvres des écrivains face à la critique, Conclusion. Other topics are: a "graphy of Écrivains franco-ontariennes de 1970-1985" (16 femmes); Genres pratiqués par les femmes (nombre de titres publiés), écrivains franco-ontariens ayant publiés entre 1970-1985; Genres pratiqués par les hommes (nombre de titres publiés), "Comparison des genres pratiqués par les hommes et les femmes, Nombre comptes rendus par ouvrage, Nombre de livres, études et thèses par auteur."

Mary McDonald-Rissanen, in "Crooked Ribs, Modern Martyrs, and Dull Days", offers popularly available images of women and juxtaposes those with representations which women generate in their life writing: on "women hidden from history". Also "Turning to Life Writing and Seeing Women in Their Own Words, Religion and Life Writing."

“Common Measure: “Folk Poetry” and the Scandal of Canadian Literature, is by Gary Kelly. “Recuperating Oblivion in The Displaced View” (1988), is by Sheena Wilson.

“To Get In Behind the Curtain” on Miriam Green Ellis’s *Travels and Tales, Pioneer Journalist of the Canadian West*, by Patricia Demers, deals with the Canadian Women’s Press Club, Calgary, in 1932.

“Catherine Mavrikakis: la force de penser (chaque jour)”, is by Maïté Snauwaert, “We all have the same dream as Joe the Plumber”, Sarah Palin, Michael Jackson, et.al. “This is What a Public Intellectual Looks Like, Dorothy Livesay’s *Housewife Years and the Public Sphere*”, is by Shauna Lancit

Part IV “Women in Movement” is a major contribution. Louise Dennys is an executive publisher for Knopf Random Vintage Canada Publishing Group and executive vice president of Random House of Canada Ltd. On “Publishing and Women in Movement”, she comments on the launch of *Stolen Life: The Journey of A Cree Woman* inside the prison system for Native Women. One of her analogies is how and why Canadian writing suddenly leapt to prominence “rather like Venus leaping out of her shell onto the beach.” (p. 232) In 2010, Dennys tried to stop the death by stoning of a woman accused of adultery in Iran. She compares publishing in the 1970s, 1997, while we exist in the margins, “messy, intolerant, dominated, and rebellious, confused and optimistic.” (p. 238) Middle class women took to writing novels, although I believe Virginia Woolf was upper-class and definitely had access to her husband’s press, in 1928. From Rachel Carson to Jane Jacobs, Toni Morrison, Naomi Klein, and many others have crossed her editor’s desk.

Sheena Wilson, in “Recuperating Oblivion in The Displaced View” (1988) is on MIdi Onodera’s Intercultural Feminist Experimental Cinematic Polyphony. This is about feminist film-making. “The Historical Contexts of The Displaced View”, when it was released. “Intercultural Film: Re-Constituting Community and Memory” is on Issei-Sansei: Grandmother-Granddaughter Relationships; Mother-Daughter Relations, and Narrative Fantasy: Reclaiming a Genealogy. Her Doctoral dissertation was on The Case of Japanese Canadian Experience in Canadian Media, Cinema, and Literature following from Internment themes, and includes Roy Miki.

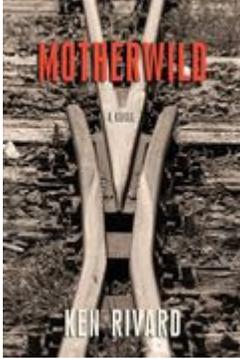
Dean Irvine's work is ground-breaking. Nevertheless, he takes great pains to indicate "my" research and "my" studies. While women represent the majority in this sphere, they are invariably "*directed*" (emphasis my own) by a man or men. The other thorny issue he (inadvertently) raises is about scholars and their research assistants. In times gone by, the assistant's work was represented as the work of the scholar (read "man") never the mere student or graduate student's work. Hence, appropriation was the name of the game. I refused lunch dates with the Dean of Graduate Students, as well as dinner invitations, at my professional peril. So insistent, that when I refused to accept his telephone calls, he sent his female office assistant to clang at my door, with an invitation one was at risk to refuse. I even wrote literary anecdotes for his speeches, keynote addresses, etc.

Dean Irvine, "A Modernist Commons in Canada", indicates Emic/Emac was never intended, at its inception, to be an exclusively an anglophone initiative, albeit there were "gaps of mistranslations". (p.48) There were panels at the bilingual association for Canadian and Quebec Literatures. (ALCO/ACQL); representing the collective labour of women's work "as both literary scholars and digital humanists". (p. 51) Nevertheless, there is a point of pride, how he lays claim to his editorial projects and his editorial work of scholarship on modernist Canadian women. For the Livesay digitization project, most students are women, *directed* by two male collaborators. (p. 52) "I am directing a group of female students". Further, women comprise 82 percent of graduate student cohorts and 63 per cent of the total number. How much recognition is there of the labour of its female researchers and assistants, engaged in editingmodernism.ca/community. The blog, in 2010, contains over 75 per cent posts by women. Women account for over 80 per cent of the recipients of funding from the project.

Chantal Savoie and Julie Roy offer "L'apport du concept d'ontologie informatique à l'étude de l'histoire littéraire des femmes au XIXe siècle, identifier les autres auteurs et les pseudonymes, identifier les textes, les classes auxiliaires et le question des relations, la question de la posture littéraire, la scène générique, la scène de la parole, un exemple d'analyse des scènes de l'énonciation, une poétique de l'enchâssement, L'analyse maintenant, et "Conclusion".

Marie Carrière is Director of the Canadian Literature Centre/Centre de littérature canadienne and teaches French and Comparative Literature at the University of Alberta. She focuses on contemporary women's writing and

the theory and history of feminism. Patricia Demers is a Distinguished University Professor in the Department of English and Film Studies and on the Comparative Literature program, at the University of Alberta. She teaches and researches in the area of women's writing, from the early modern period to the present.



Review of *Motherwild*, a novel, by Ken Rivard
(Saskatoon: Thistledown Press, 2014) 390 pp. paper

The mother wild does not necessarily indicate a wild mother, although the savage beast who raised a sensitive boy certainly is a hysteric personality type.

Salinger's first Holden Caulfield story, "I'm Crazy" appeared in *Colliers Magazine* on December 22, 1945. Certainly, crazy-making is explored in depth with many variations in *Motherwild*. The tone and movement of the narrative depends on various voices, multi-layered, revealing, unadorned. The working-class characters go about their daily lives with some degree of recognition, if only through the Holden Caulfield-like central narrator Joey.

This may provisionally be a novel, an inevitable extension of the poetic line, originating in the vein of post-card or flash fiction(s). Having said that, genres tend to be more important to publishing houses than to writers or readers. Since *Missionary Positions* (Black Moss Press, 2008), the poet of *Frankie's Desires* (Quarry Press, 1987) and *Kiss Me Down to Size* (also Thistledown Press) has been elongating his poetic line to *If She Could Take All These Men* (Beach Holme Publishers, 1995).

Dedicated to his sister and brother, the fictive memoirist account begins with December, 1959; the setting is specifically on Dion Street, where the St. Laurence suburb of Montréal begins, exactly one block north from where Decarie meets Metropolitan Boulevard. The fictionalized big sister Nila, "and Joey's my boy, my son", in an unvarnished lens, are introduced in medias res.

The precipitating incident is due to an encounter with a woman in the park who suffers from miscarriages; at which point "Ma" recommends they all offer public prayers. This causes the boy as first-person fallible narrator to keep everyone at a distance, ever since his days in a stroller. The matriarch

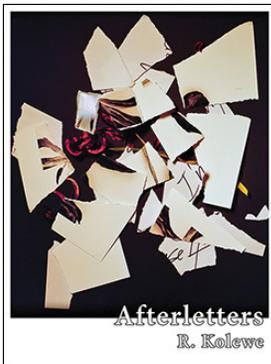
smokes Mayfair cigarettes. The father figure is gentle if inadequate, with his upper denture removed. Witness the streetcar on St. Catherine Street in the early 1940s. Joey has learned to just ignore his mother when she "gets crazy". There is sexual abuse by a non-family member and other sub-plots intended for character-driven development.

This is a moment-to-moment collection of events, which comprise the seasons, if not decades, Feb. 1960, May-June, 1960, July-August 1960, Sept Oct, 1960, Nov-Dec 1960, Dec 2002.

Joey ultimately concedes "Oh. Ma passed away two years ago. Her brain was gone. She was in pain. The doctor suggested we pull the plug on her life support machine. And Pa, well he died three years before that from a few things. Prostrate cancer, pneumonia, a second broken hip."

By the final scenes, "And my ma, she ended up in one of those dementia wards. When I'd go visit here, she liked to make grunting noises at the birds in their cages in the lobby. Sometimes she made smacking noises with her lips at the fish in the hallway aquarium...A few times I had to change her diaper."

This is a mature vision expressed by a professional author, who brings to bear all his talent in fiction-making to the basic tragedy of human life, we are all mortal, why can't we just accept that?



Review of Afterletters, by R. Kolewe (Toronto: BookThug, 2014) 64 pp. paper

The poet also is a photographer and the cover image "Concept Anxiety" was supplied by him. This is his first book and is dedicated to authors and lovers Ingeborg Backmann (1926-1973) and Paul Celan (1920-1970).

The poetry relies on appropriated texts from their correspondence and their other writings which were translated. One of the inspirations was Eirín Mouré's *Sheep's Vigil by a Fervent Person*, a "transelation" of Fernando Pessoa.

Without the originals at hand it is challenging to distinguish what is creative intent and what has been borrowed by "found" poems. There are italicized

lines or glossas poems within. Some appear to be prompts for a rendering and notes or a bibliography of editions consulted, as one might document an essay.

Overall the effect is engaging as an intellectual exchange, either between partners or an inner argument within the ego or psyche. The sibilant “s” links “swiftsure”, with plurals of “books, hours, “dates”, rivers", " lives”, with “yes” and “Say”.

There are visual allusions of Chagall “L’Oeil Vert”, as "ouvert" is open. Overall the collection embraces functional ambiguity, “I do not know why I want you, or what for” whereas otherwise there is some certitude.

There are repeating images of poppies, mirrors, enthralled with “This is not a dialogue” but what is it?

There are adjectival phrases and sequences, on winter city, streetlight, subject-object relations, on reading, thinking. The Word objects, part objects, "with always objects left.”

Of particular interest is a photograph of "you taking a photograph", with questions about list-making, while engaged in the active process of making lists. Witness a lost art of “par avion” and accoutrements of envelopes, pen, typewriter. Symbolist letters arise from a coded language and may arrive in volumes, packets, or singles.