

News from the Feminist Caucus, by Anne Burke

This month news from Susan McCaslin, reviews of *Short Talks*, by Anne Carson; *Monologue Dogs*, by Méira Cook; *a short history of crazy bone, long poem*, by Patrick Friesen; *The Banquet of Donny & Ari: scenes from the opera*, by Naomi Guttman; *Infinite Citizen of the Shaking Tent*, by New Member Liz Howard; *This World We Invented*, poems by Carolyn Marie Souaid.

Susan McCaslin is an established Canadian poet and Faculty Emerita of Douglas College in Westminister, BC where she taught English and Creative Writing for twenty-three years. She is the author of thirteen volumes of poetry, including *The Disarmed Heart* (The Saint Thomas Poetry Series, May 2014). Her previous volume, *Demeter Goes Skydiving* (University of Alberta Press, 2011), was a finalist for the BC Book Prize for Poetry and the first-place winner of the Alberta Book Publishing Award 2012. - See more at: <http://selkirk.ca/faculty/susan-mccaslin#sthash.TYZN0LPW.dpuf>

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Hi Ann,

Here's the most recent link to my just posted essay on my friendship with the poet Robin Blaser. Feel free to post it in the Feminist Caucus section if it fits. Robin was part of a West Coast avant-garde poetry movement centred around Vancouver and SFU that I stepped into in the late sixties to early seventies. It's a tribute to Robin but also a reprisal of those heady years.

<http://paulenelson.com/2015/07/29/susan-mccaslin-on-robin-blaser/>

Best,

Susan

<http://www.members.shaw.ca/smccaslin/>

I have been writing since the age of twelve when I discovered the magic of great books and the power of poetic language. In graduate school at Simon Fraser in 1969, poetry found me again and became my life's deep vocation. My "luminous companions" include William Blake and the Romantic poets, Rainer Maria Rilke, Vernon Watkins, and Denise Levertov. I am drawn to the mystical traditions of many cultures and religions and experience poetry as a musicality arising from silence

Dear Ann,

I'm forwarding a link to an essay I wrote recently about my poetry mentor Robin Blaser that is also a reprisal of the poetry scene at SFU in the seventies. If you wish to post it on

the Feminist Caucus page for the next issue of the League newsletter, that would be fine by me.

<http://cascadiapoetryfestival.org/trailblazing-with-blaser/>

Please announce also that Inanna Publications has agreed to publish my Selected Poems in the spring or fall of 2017 (title not yet decided).

Warm regards,

Susan

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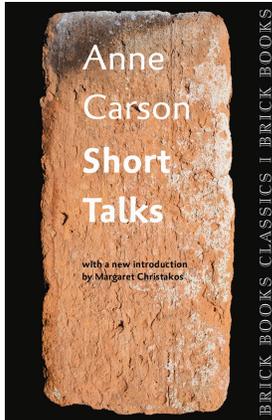
From the moment I heard Robin Blaser lecture in my first graduate course at Simon Fraser University, I was drawn like a moth to the strings of a piano, to borrow a metaphor from his well-loved “The Moth Poem”:

The moth in the piano
will play on
frightened wings brush
the wired interior
of that machine

I said, ‘master’

Coming as a callow graduate student from Seattle to SFU at the age of twenty-two in 1969, I found that Robin had only been teaching there since 1966. Like me, he had emigrated from the States, and similarly (though I had no idea then), we both were to become Canadian citizens and remain permanently in Canada. I had recently crossed the border at Blaine with my draft-resisting boyfriend to pursue graduate studies in English Literature, having chosen SFU over the University of California at Berkeley because of SFU’s edgy northern image, accounts of its radicalism, and memories of visiting Vancouver with my family as a teen. Shortly before my arrival, the students had stormed the faculty lounge, while “be ins” and protests against the Vietnam War were part of everyday campus life.

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Review of *Short Talks*, by Anne Carson, with an introduction and afterword by the author and a new introduction by Margaret Christakos (London, Ontario: Brick Books, 2015) 79 pp. paper.

Aristotle in the author's "Introduction" is the prime mover from which all good comes: probability and necessity, but he omits dragons. She states that she took dictation of fifty-three fascicles, until she was left with only three when men removed the others, and then she was engaged in "filling in the parts I missed".

This sounds disingenuous but it is a phantastic (as in "phantasm") explanation for her self-separation from experience and events when this is compounded by her persona as removed from emotion; hence she ostensibly merely opines "on" a variety of topics in academic terms and controlled professional discourse.

As a result we have three old women and the author's fear of boredom, because her standards are set impossibly high, revealing a "plant called 'audacity' which poets mistake for violets."

There is no mistaking the words are missing but no chance that words do not exist, if only insufficient to express emotion and consciously so. Will she strive to impede movement by deflating symbol until all we have are what once was?

From the beginning of time, man thought about a "her". An unfortunate firebomb leads to life lessons in full colour. The *méthode* of Seurat captured nature, in pointillism, passionately. Prokofiev was ill. Racine and Baudelaire are stuffing their shadows into the mouth of a French woman. Geisha were men, artists, "someone to yearn for" until that instant when "she is/ coming along and the grass is stirring". The challenging male paradoxically demands her conformity.

This is an urban anthropology of rituals, their proper execution and function, "if you have understood my original instruction". Place can ironically crash. Haiku limitations are fulfilled. Ovid in exile weeps because his epic poem will not be read. Autism speaks of light, eating, Central Park. Parmenides may have intended "*delusion*" when he said "*cities*". The minor and the major are permutations and combinations, often interchangeable, except for *Elektra*. Braque distrusted objects. A woman on the prowl is

more powerful than one deflowered and abandoned. Kafka distrusted marriage. Van Gogh's nails shuddered in pain. Claudel was committed but she, nevertheless, loomed large. Victims of love pursue us. Given Kafka's sister and Auschwitz, women such as the Mona Lisa are strong.

Carson casts her net widely to capture the dash and dot and everything in between, but the coded fragments are phosphorescent. Rembrandt. Sylvia Plath. *Madame Bovary* and the Rockies. These small shapes. Peru and John Milton. Noah and the known world drowning in taxonomy. The Bronte sisters. A uterus and decorous silverware laws. The Scream. Anatomy of Rembrandt's painting. Buried alive. Emily Dickinson, 1883. Dostoevsky with flashing eyes.

She engages with all the questions of what she construes as male and female "soul murder". King Oedipus and his Third Eye. Love bargaining. The self-styled Cassandra she carries secrets, presumably from the Oracle. "I also carry untimely ideas and sins/ in general". ("Short Talk On My Task", p. 67) On Hedonism, Desires "bloom in me all night". (p. 68) A King in experimental prison, "Yet he could see." (p. 69) "I am writing this to be as wrong as/ possible to you." ("Short Talk On Shelter", p. 70) The booming Old Testament voice: "Who are you?" ("Short Talk On Who You Are", p. 71)

This was Carson's first collection of published poetry, before the eight following, among them *Excessive Love Protheses*, *Sooner*, *Welling* and *Multitudes*. There are twelve books of poetry and prose, with five books of translations, to her credit, so why reissue the 1992 *Short Talks* in a new edition on the occasion of Brick Books 40th anniversary?

Margaret Christakos, in "Glass, Slag: Short Talk on Anne Carson's Hewn Flows", describes "45 small taut rectangles" from a shapeshifter. Christakos contributed twenty pages of text, in which she praises Carson's accomplishments, especially her essay "The Gender of Sound" (in *Glass, Irony, and God*) on women's repressed emotions, such as sexual pleasure, grief, and rage. This poet-critic works hard to fill in the gaps by incisive comparisons with Carson's other work in prose. While illuminating and a prompt for further research, in particular how Carson learns to develop character and plot, somehow the poems should stand on their own.

There are a total of seventy-one aphoristic contemplations, with an even briefer "Afterword", which she says "should leave the skin quickly, like an alcohol rub." (p. 73) Christakos situates them as "indirect addresses from a chorus of individual voices gesturing personae." (p. 11) Carson, who earns a living from teaching Greek, produced "her contemporized translations of Greek tragic plays". (p. 12) So when she alludes to how another individual finished reading *Antigone*, this is more meaningful than initially indicated, especially since this Sophocles play is about a sex strike by Greek females to stop war in their own time. The more so, because mention of the play is followed by an entry on "married" and was recorded on the occasion of said individual's wedding day, May 20, 1765. ("Short Talk On Afterwords") Not to be mysterious or as inscrutable as Carson can be at times, the example is from Emily Tennyson's grandmother and the source her diary entry.

The process of Defloration is clear from a line drawing depicting a supine identifiably female whose mask is slipping beneath a monster with elongated arms, an overbearing figure whose unearthly fingers penetrate the victim's eye.

Feminism is inescapable in her choice of translations, *Electra* by Sophocles, ancient poems *If Not*, *Winter: Fragments of Sappho*, *An Oresteia*, and *Iphigenia among the Taurians* (Euripides).

Carson designed and facilitated *Influency: A Toronto Poetry Salon*. She received the T.S. Eliot Prize and the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize. She was recently awarded the inaugural Folio Prize.



Review of *Monologue Dogs*, by Méira Cook (London, Ontario: Brick Books, 2015) 80 pp. paper.

There are four titled sections of the full-length collection: “Bone Shop”, “The Hunger Artists”, the title section “Mongrel Heart”, and “Crooked”. There are ten poems in the first section. “The Devil’s Advocate” is an address to a jury by a defence attorney whose client is ostensibly a poet because “He is busy/ falling through blank verse for all eternity”. (p. 3) Abraham, a religious leader in Genesis and father of Isaac’s father, engages in The Law Hebraic-style. (“Here Am I”) The Book of Summer requires something “to take the edge off memory”. (“The Fly-Away Girl”) Subsequently, the garden is empty. (“The Come-Back Kid”) A series of poems in “Cracked” captures the voices of the lustful offender Eve, her unnamed boyfriend whom she seduces, and finally probably the essential and phallic character, “Any Old Snake”. Shakespeare’s Cymbeline is a gloss for a dying Imogen (a woman who wearies of the book) and her puzzled husband. (“Iachimo”) A minor epic examines Vasco da Gama the explorer and the New World, “un-/Edened”. The contexts are his wife, mistress, Queen, a Pilgrim Ship (and Incident). The Angel Gabriel consults “Young Eve, All Grown Up” amid the Library of Imaginary Books. “Easing The Spring” begins with My Mother and her Daughter, one of the problems being Bad Translations vs virtuous ones. “My mother flowers, a rose”. In “Her Mother”, memory roars, Oh Demeter, “Oh, my daughter!” However, “Time’s up! Time’s Up!” (p. 25)

The second section deals with the theme of hunger, personified as “he”, as conceived in a familiar preface “Once upon a time a mother...” Pain is a proof in the Theorem of Love.

What follows is a reworking of the Hans and Gretel fable, a dramatic rendering of brother and sister. While Jacob Grimm is an old man, “and all the stories are burning.” The point of view is personalized, for Dear Lotte, Dear Wilhelm.

The third section sounds nostalgic, despite the mistreatment and misdiagnosis of women (“The Talking Cure”) which appear Freudian and misguided. Shakespeare’s “Lear in Africa” begins with Her Daddy, His Best Girl, in four instances, followed simply by the generic Daddy and Girl. The pariah dogs give way to truth personified as a dog kennelled. The dead Lear is “No longer King”, but speaking from his funeral bier. The dog of legend is soon “a real-true stink dog”, then become packs, but three-legged, one-eyed, and generated “of this mongrel century, howling”. (p. 51) The dead Lear calls for “Cordiality”, instead of Cordelia. He sees himself but from a distance. No rooster was crowned. There are five acts on Judas Iscariot, in Gethsemane, who betrayed Jesus. However, “*any dog can have its bone of you.*” (p. 54) Crow is personified as kiss, the hunger, and soundless. Jacob wrestled angels. By dawn, the “stagecraft of the mind” overcomes “I and Thou”, Judas and the Lord. Geppetto was a puppet father for “The Almost Boy”. Saint Casaubon is addressed, “kiddo”, and “Angels spin”, for the Constellation Mercy. A halo is reduced to “a cheap neon sign.” (p. 62) The poet is proficient in the sonnet form. A gloss from a letter by Virginia Woolf about “The Mark on the Wall” provides an introduction for poems about the unusual marriage of Leonard her publisher at Holgate and Virginia. He offers, “Your knack,/ lady, was for sufficiency.” She calls on gravity, in an obvious allusion to her own suicide by drowning. He ironically praises her for facing her fears, despite the fact “you wanted to be a real girl/ with stones inside your pockets.” The “real” appears to echo the almost-or-near boy puppet. Her pearls were lies and she takes advantage of having the last comments.

In the final section “Crooked” there are a series of short explanatory notes, on “Here Am I”, The Porthole Gaze (on Vasco da Gama), on Mistranslation (the Spanish poem “Somnambule Ballad” as inspiration for “Sleepwalkers in the lexicon of mistranslations”); on Hunger (what motivates a mother to lead her children into the forest”); on Thank You (acknowledgements).

Cook has three previous poetry collections with Brick Books. Her first novel *The House on Sugarbush Road* (Winnipeg, MB: Great Plains Publications/ Enfield & Wizenty, 2012) won the McNally Robinson Manitoba Book of the Year Award. Her second novel *Nightwatching* (Toronto: Harper Collins Canada) was published in May, 2015. She lives in Winnipeg.



Review of *a short history of crazy bone, long poem*, by Patrick Friesen (Salt Spring Island, B.C.: Mother Tongue Publishing, 2015) 121 pp. paper.

The adventuring of a trickster was captured on cover in oil on canvas, merged with Ecclesiastes, italicized, in an encomium of word painting. Part 1 “All the rivers run into the sea” begins with her birth and rebirth, how she dances, dreams, wakes. A chimera which defies time, her day is night, “it’s noon all day”. The sun “sinks”, while she “drinks”, in syncopated movement, the narrator addresses the river. Her beloved as western icon both “a fugitive and a vagabond”. The setting is struck, between town and rainless dust storm, half rhymed “fog” and “clotted” scenery; an ironic allusion to the Walt Disney Snow White’s refrain, “some day my prince/ will come”. Her drink is something stronger than river water, she settles to urinate, like a wild thing. A half-imagined phone but her hand is empty. Entrails *sans* knight *cum* shield. She seems lost and seeks saving, like a flamingo, she is nimble, half-remembering. Her life spans at least one or two hundred years. Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* (“what comes/ or what’s long gone”) she painted her finger nails.

A New Testament sinner, Christian forgiveness, pagan grief; a fox confronts her, momentarily bird folk come and go, wounded by a sliver. Hawk circling, sun raised and lowered like *deus ex machina*; she the blue the sky the dress, the emptiness of dusk, her parasol celestial. “this country/ this tired country” becomes smoke in the absence of fire. She is self-aware to the point of personal, painful doubt and unvarnished want. Green sleeves are nature incarnate a drowning reenacted, she a ghost-like bride *sans* bridegroom liken to Miss Havisham of *Great Expectations*, amid dilapidated accoutrements of forgotten ritual. She dreams him. Something of her birth is illegitimate, ashen, dregs of burnt-out stars. Pioneering homesteads now leveled in ruins. Her self-care and beauty routine involves a hand-held mirror to reflect or ape nature and charcoal rub. Moon-like egg, she a fetus, her companion a visitor crow, the setting a graveyard bent to thistle, milkweed, and monarchs. Her lover escaped, she is bound to him in an unworldly or otherworldly fashion. mating is equated with ‘that endless/ hunger// god eat/ god’. The spell unbroken by barbed wire fencing, *a folie aux deux* or “to be loved to madness”. She is child-like, by turns mother, and grandmother at others. Solipsism an act of self-worship, *vis a vis* “me myself/ and I” idolatry. A momentary self-realization, “I am thief/ of the rainbow// I am anything/ I was born to”.

Crow, owl, slaughtering new or crescent moon, a story of dark feathers, kingfishering. She skips a stone, flips a coin. A great black bull sign of Taurus and the sun. Her bedroom outhouse door. Barefoot southern funeral procession. "one loses a life/ the other gains it". Her rejoicing, coughing, laughing sadness. a panoply of sensation, condensation, condescension, crazy slows, blows, she doubts, promises, she remembers words until "there are no words". The other side is life after and we reside in the now and how; we can imagine the other based on nothing much but our hope. A plum rather than an apple from the tree of knowledge: the spirit of fire, water, earth, smoke, "yadda/ yadda yadda".

She leaves her scent much like the stray dog but more conscious still of role playing, gods and country. "there is a woman/ then there isn't". Like the river she possesses a mouth, "the end as the beginning".

In part 2 "...from whence the rivers come thither they return again" is composed as the first-person persona relegated or relocated to "naugahyde blisters", a sense of nostalgia mixed with regrets. "he danced me/ into his car/ and we drank and talked/ until our clothes fell off." For continuity's sake, "crazy" reenters the scene, and we learn more from her voice. There are pregnancy, child birth, and her seeming rebirth, her twin. hidden from view. The third person fallible speaker imparts, then departs. A drama or melodrama of events glimmering through a glass darkly, whether of pillage or plundering. There appears a somewhat long winter, prefacing instantaneous spring, a fox den then, her opinion or ours of: "they are all dead/ awaiting resurrection". The rudimentary elements of a Corvair, rocking chair, a rose, dove, emblems, but what of "that inside blade/ you know?" an unanswered proposition which hangs in the air. "christ is the question/ but no one's asking".

The page, birch, and snow are white and therefore almost invisible. She appropriates language, she prints but without thinking. A boatman she poet with-out her swans. Her shame renders her a presiding gargoyle, a scapegoat for the community. Her gambling instincts are abandoned. even the geese are ghosts. She passes for millenniums, as watcher: red beets, lips, blood; silhouette embedded in the transcendent landscape. She is camera. an indwelling spirit, whether servant or slave. Black bird, owl, hawk, she "a born ranter/ a raconteur deluxe". Note: pun-intended, the "rosy-fingered dawn" (a Homeric epithet).

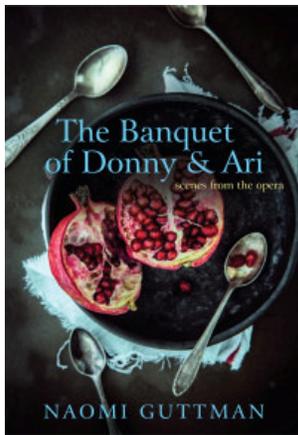
A skinny blonde and his boom box, scene of randy sailors, lorelei and the boatman possess stories she will repossess. "poultice/ and a prayer. rust/ and rope", she waxes ill and hallucinatory, feverish. The howling dogs of war waiting at the gate, the highwayman, a figure, a mirage, sliver in thumb, heart, an envelope as plot device from Thomas Hardy's romances ("like Casterbridge/ or Tess or one of those books" See: *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the Ubervilles*) the ploughman.

The voice remembers and recreates events, seasons, movement; desiring diviner, compares "some dream/in some cave// some cave in some mind" playfully provoking the reader. Moon a cannon ball cinematic device, scythe a metaphor for wonder, golden. a

fool's blessing, "that howling idiocy/ of heaven", reductive reasoning. She a watcher of a distant male figure, like Lot, not Lot's wife, a prayer, "whoa right through me", a troubadour, medieval Petrarchan "silent"; a John Lennon song. whirling, seeing, spinning, "that eye/ inside the eye"; nature, not chair or baby carriage, dens.

The scene suddenly shifts to the specifics of place and time, namely "roslyn road", "osborne/ and river avenue", of transistor radios, nostalgia for the end of things, like a small sparrow. Then the city was honest, wild cars confined to country roads, boozing, Bacchanalian, somewhat "slippery girls". Crazy gravitates to this in the time, as well as "I squirmed on that leather seat". She was "spread and pinned like a butterfly". She enjoys entrails of red grapes, alludes to fish and loaf of Christian miracles; music of Mozart and Schubert, bulls, are both "hidden" and "unbelievable". She ponders age. Her thoughts are "crazy/ with color and shape". After another man and another cigarette smoked, she loses her balance, "and my sermon/ unmounted" (compare the Biblical Sermon on the Mount, hence fish and loaves, sparrow that falls from Heaven, etc.) herein the reductive "blah, blah, blah/ blah blah blah". That is to say: a song, a book, a boat; come and go, but remain in between, the mid-point, "neither true nor false" (to any man, advice from the Shakespearean character Polonius; a dream and a lemon. Of bulls, sea, and bonfire: "how they used to pray", wintry, fades away, like love. "No obituary" in Spain or Montreal. She remembers, lies and maybes, "but history doesn't know/ what it knows". A man is identified as Ezekiel, "some local yokel", or a Babylonian. She builds the fire, not in the city, "in the womb of Christ" (Jesus in the womb); hidden truth, hell revealed. a temple, tipi, dwelling; puns "crows-feet", breaks comb and buries mirror. The apotheosis, "I dreamed god/ now by god I am dreamed". The horses are Spanish performers. Of slipping through a keyhole and sabotage, theatric in extremis; spilled blood, smell, she an angel ("the child dying/ into this world" instead of out of it.); bathos of "oh christ/ what a lovely mess". This is destabilization "brought down" intensity, she is "just thin and bones". An inventory of horse, owl, trout, singing and swaying, the bone is talisman, unearthed, though "and it will be given" is untrue thought. Rather a variation on Alexander Pope, "to err is divine" not "forgive". The conclusion an anti-climactic moment, "a mumbling sister/ to the dead", her vocation.

This long poem has elements of the stage about it and could easily become a one-woman drama, with comedic and tragic performance pieces. Friesen was shortlisted for the Governor General's Literary Award for poetry in 1997 and the Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize in B.C. in 1998 and 2003. He won the McNally Robinson Book of the Year Award in Manitoba in 1996 and the ReLit Award for poetry in 2012.



**Review of *The Banquet of Donny & Ari: scenes from the opera*, by Naomi Guttman
London, Ontario: Brick Books, 2015) 112 pp. paper.**

This is mock heroic poem or poems which play loose and fast with the romance of the Rose, a nontraditional and updated version of the Orpheus-Eurydice myth, in an operatic format. Guttman indicates she sourced Monteverdi's opera *L'Orfeo* by means of Claudio Monteverdi: *Orfeo*, edited by John Whenham. She also used liner notes from audio and DVD recordings. There is a Yiddish or Hebrew calendar which underscores the highly dramatic plot.

One of the epigraphs introduces the theme of singing (*Le nuove musiche*, 1602) which will pervade the poems in this collection. The organization is based on the seasonal round of winter, spring, summer, and autumn; divided into five play acts, and with a bridge of "Interludes".

In Prologue, the passion-fuelled hero discovers his heroine engaged in political-defiance by weaving ("Hochelaga"). Their love in "Early Music" expressed by Bach on the harpsichord. His firmament is reduced to "Chernobyl, "ligatured" at their wedding, portending "the end of belief in the world."

In Act I Winter, the awful present becomes as dead and unmoving as "the wax museum". However, Donny desires a powerful savior role, perhaps Orpheus shielding sailors from Sirens. Ari self-starves, an emblem for women, buried in an unhappy, unfulfilling union. She turns away, spurning his criticisms. Her family members mother, sister, father are poor role models. Her obsessions take hold with exercise. Art and craft combine to express what plagues infest the earth. She yields to her son's demands. Household chores, such as laundry and shopping, constrain her spirit. There is a comparison with the natural world ("Water Cycle") A lullaby for Onno, another clueless son, contains mythological contexts. Ari's anticipatory grief is not shared with sister Sophie, sibling rivalry rears its ugly head. The maxim of "*I think, therefore I feel?*" is expressed in a prose poem In Memoriam, by means of a sonata form, obviously played by Donny. This is followed by a "Fugue" which exposes the estrangement of the couple.

In Act II Spring, Ari devours the emptiness, avoiding Donny's grasp. She recalls Will, a high school fling, with fondness but Donny's lust is strong. "When did she/ stop trying?"

("Sour Teeth") The Music of the Spheres was evident in "Shiva and Shakti fucking". Donny is drawn by a woman's summer charms. ("The Male Gaze") Bishop Street is inventoried in evolutionary layers. ("Montreal Limestone") Stephan's bicycle is his chariot. Ari is drawn to the pleasures of fresh vegetables and an orgasm. Indoor discord is compared with degrees of performance. Donny reengages with "craft is core" ("Beautiful Beast") before auditioning sopranos, one in particular "up, up". (Speranza") She is as Ari was once, indeed his "Eurydice!" He toys with a male singer. Donny practices his creed. Stephan and Maurice climax (musically speaking). However, safety is nowhere.

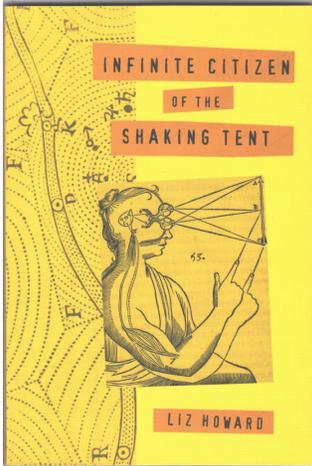
In Act III Interludes the emphasis is on patterns at the loom ("Criss-Cross" and "Felt") a marriage disappearing. A burial cloth prefaces Ari's Human Footprint Series, three imagined artworks. Even Donny is impressed, with Orfeo's lyre, Apollo's son. The singers are rehearsed, a chorus of Orfeo and Eurydice.

In Act IV Summer Donny cooks, tells a Phytheas bedtime story to Onno, but Ari is suspicious of Sally. Donny's sister and mother lived "in grey girlhood" and he opens a familiar story book. Donny and son Onno share a bed. Onno sleep alone. Beatrice slept with Donny before their marriages but Sally came after. Ari clings to the secret. Now Ari meets a man Jean. She recalls first meeting Donny. ("Radio Days") Donny is sleepless. Jean has an apartment. Ari becomes Falconetti's silent Joan, but "she lets Donny touch it too." ("Boys")

Act V Autumn the Yiddish calendar moves to Rosh Hashannah, Sugar Maple is Shameless. Ari's father has a garage sale of her mother's belongings. Ari prepares for her exhibition. Her prose poem praises husbands in a Biblical sense. Ari inherits the family parrot. ("The Long Marriage")

There are notes and acknowledgements which can gainfully be read after the book rather than in tandem. Ari's Human Footprint Series was inspired by a multi-media series of tapestries by fiber artist Deborah Weir. Some of it was displayed in a travelling textile exhibit, "Confluence, curated by Linga Buell and Weir.

Guttman teaches English and Creative Writing at Hamilton College in Clinton, New York. Her first book of poems *Reasons for Winter* won the A.M. Klein Award for Poetry. Her second *Wet Apples, White Blood* was co-winner of the Adirondack Centre for Writing's Best Book of Poems for 2007.



Review of *Infinite Citizen of the Shaking Tent*, by Liz Howard (Toronto, Ontario: McClelland and Stewart, 2015) 98 pp. paper.

The title borrows from philosophy “I am my world. (The microcosm)”, since Citizenship is a recurring theme, from the leash (“Neural Cascade”), “the city bound me so I entered” (“Thinktent”); other devices are a coda, the use of nouns, neurochemicals and petrochemicals, “what else is a river but the promise of a text”? The pleasures “Of Hereafter Song” deflate and confuse boundaries with abandon, in a lyric “Prologue”. Nature’s dialysis preempts “the women of bitumen” in Athabasca. (“Contact”) Dioxin capable of skyping, maw with mosses, she is or acts upon a “Ministry of the shaking dress” (ritual).

In “Skullambient”, compare the breath pauses of “37 Claires” in literature, John Clare, anarchaeology, and teleology, with the subsequent left-hand discourse opposed by the right-hand italicized story-telling (between Watershed and Shield). An oration moves from margin to margin to the double-spaced in a self-address, “Hey self”, ego-duo matchup. “Psychogeography” is a pleasurable association of the terrain with imagined responses, “I made love to a man lost...to be a woman was to be lost”. (p. 64)

Some poems which are centred appear to wrap-around in equal distances as spiral shapes. “Look Book” deals with the persona of the poet discovering bird death, decomposition “a necklace of sticky/ pearls in peristalsis”, oppositional ribbed and invertebrates. The scene shifts to age twenty and apparent memory of her homeless, drunk birth father, possibly the “he” of the bird body. In “1992” the clapboard house of “Look Back” is a welfare half-duplex, associated with whale “umber and verdigris”, “mucus”, and anonymity. In “Debarker” refers to her job in the bush, pubic hair, a narrative of memory, “this brain/ sprouted from my spine/ in an allegory of trees”. In “Redress” clear-cut forest and Dante’s *Inferno* is blended with an obituary, as well as a caution from her stepfather. Gail Scott’s poem “The Obituary” alludes to appearing and disappearing. In “Bildungsroman” the speaker who is by turns nineteen, twelve, fifteen, while Orion a god is involved.

A Howard note on Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s “The Song of Hiawatha”, published in 1855, states that the poet (of his time and place) appropriated and confused Anishinaabe history and mythology with a colonial presence. In “Every Human Heart Is

Human", Howard acknowledges, "I, Minnehaha, a small LOL/ fiction antecedent/ to quarry a nation." Howard self-identifies as both settler and Indigenous, hence one of the "two-spirit persons". Ultimately, she commands the reader, "I gave you this name then said/ *Erase it.*" However, the poet is multi-faced, masked, in frenetic performance. Her method involves thrifting from ecological and sociological reports, in addition to remixing the previously irreconcilable.

The full-length collection is organized in four parts, the first and fourth entitled "Hyperboreal". In the first section three poems are titled "Standard Time", the first of which riffs on "lung-fed prosody", with the green word "as vertigo, vertigo", concluding with a sense of possession "It's ours". (p. 5) Note: The poet defines and personifies "affect", an aid to cognition/ shameless in its missionary/ position of standard time." (p. 21) The second departs from settlers' dreams, anthropology, petrochemicals, and "not otherwise/ specified". (p. 9) The third contains unnatural sciences, such as botany, seismic physics, and engineering, in a closed encampment "where we find ourselves". (p. 30) In the fourth section "hypnagogically" is another departure from an additional realm of science (if coined) with the scientist Oppenheimer. The poet is proud of synaesthesia, (an amalgam of anesthesia and synthetic aesthetics) because she realizes "the word is a purple gash I could write" (an orchid). (p. 79)

Section one contains its own "Epilogue", following a long poem "Thinktent" (an homage to the philosopher Wittgenstein"). She is not merely his "girl" but all of us a multiplicity of selves, in this instance at a potlatch in the present tense. She plays with assonance and alliteration, as well as a refrain, nature as well as biology and art, "a false shore above the original." (p. 22) Her stated purposes are to dislocate reality and to upend causality. ("Epilogue")

Section four begins with a long poem "North By South" of Hudson's Bay, the Arctic Ocean, and the Beaufort Sea. Heading south, December displays "the court of words". She relies on "a fictive province/ of selves within /doppler range" and NORAD. An ode to the body, poetry evaporates from biology, "the silt/ of me returns", with the chimera or shamanistic figure "poet scientist Anishinaabe". Citizenship is a recurring theme, though the "province" operates on multiple levels. history a mere ellipsis.

Section four contains a series of segment poems or poem fragments, prefaced by "Revenant", of "Loss", "Misremembered", and "Heaven". Many of the images are reflective of faith, science, and worship: "canticles", "psychic", "epiphytes", "embryonic", "pyrotechnic", etc. This faith-based prayer of sorts arises from doubt, otherwise illegible or shredded, with an addendum ("inside the animal I am") and a concluding riot of gaming ("gutter", "glitter"; "baroque", "brokenness", "brackish"). Light is by rote, if language remains "the unintelligible" (and by comparison "intelligible") "diction. (p. 90)

There is an Anishinaabemowin Glossary which is an aid to interpretation, since "Jisakiiwinini" is defined as a spiritual healer who conducts the Shaking Tent rite in which spirits are consulted to obtain that which is beyond human knowledge; "Gitchi

Manitou: Great Spirit, and Nanabozho is a trickster figure and cultural hero. "Rising Sample: Addendum" is a recombinative sonnet that constitutes a dendrochronology of language from the first fourteen poems of the book. The "Revenant" poems represent an earlier foray into this strategy.

Howard was a Feminist Caucus panelist and presented her paper "Poetics of the Psoas: Walking, Embodiment, and Feminist Mentorship" at the League of Canadian Poets Conference, Winnipeg, 2015. She presented "O lands! Objections! Rewriting The Song of Hiawatha" at the Annual Conference of American Comparative Literature Association, in Vancouver, B.C. in 2011.

Howard completed a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing at the University of Guelph and works as a research officer in cognitive psychology at the University of Toronto. Her chapbook *Skullambient* (Toronto: Ferno House Press, 2011) was a finalist for the 2012 bp Nichol Chapbook Award. In 2010, she published "Essay on Her Men: A recombinatureation (online supplement)" in *Matrix Magazine*. She contributed to an anthology *Toward Some. Air* (Banff, AB: Banff Centre Press, 2015).



Review of *This World We Invented*, poems by Carolyn Marie Souaid (London, Ontario: Brick Books, 2015) 77 pp. paper.

In part I "Sketchbook" the language is associated with *101 Things to Learn in Art School*, by Kit White, among these scale, shape, space, pattern, figure and ground, light, perspective, colour, chiaroscuro, symmetry, context, notes on composition, collage, and shadow, all of which form the titles of each poem. The lead poem is about schooling, Joshua's fate, and, in addition, indicates layers of thought are what drive the idea, not any individual. She ponders mortality, "being here for a time,/ and then not." (p. 4) Space is filled with human pain, even Intensive Care, through which she is able to strike "With my pencil, vigorously." (p. 5) She feels like a movie heroine, until her luck runs out. A husband feels trapped by work and family, until she releases him. Morning brings a fresh, new day. A son's birthday is an occasion for contemplation. Emotional absence is personified as "iced slate, timber wolf/ Shadow." The passage of time is forty day and forty nights or seven days and seven nights. For Adopt-a-Kid there is no miracle, while she awaits air conditioning. The man knows about lust while he watches for the coroners. Innocence is tempered by experience, especially of the "disturbed ecosystem". (p. 15) An

ornithologist is able to teach the proper use of a camera. "Collage" is aptly titled because the poem begins with first breath, time grew, a clock runs "in either direction", until time's collapse, and "saying *home*." (p. 19) Faith is tested along the Biblical lines of Noah, but "the path runs out". (p. 20)

In part i of II "This World We Invented" also associated with *101 Things to Learn in Art School* the poet deals with how ideas are executed. In "Bildungsroman" presumably a novel of formation through the protagonist's developing mind, from childhood to experience, through spiritual crisis to maturity, recognition of one's identity and role in the world. (*A Glossary of Literary Terms*, Seventh Edition, by M.H. Abrams (Orlando, Florida: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 2002, p. 193). Fate is involved in the blink of an eye, "the age-old story" of civilization, the universe is in decline, but origins can be overcome. (p. 25) "City of Everything" is an extensive inventory of urban elements. Emily Carr's painting reflects the absence of God. In the space of "where a poem should've been" she laments, "What else can I do, a writer who writes all day," losing the light, her studio apartment "hemorrhaging". ("Seagulls") Chaucer's parliament of fowls is suggested by the line "I like my wily council of birds". (p. 31) The eye expresses "a seismic grasp", she is lustful. ("Objects of Desire", p. 33) The Jewish Museum was "uber-real", followed by poetry films, and a lost object replaced. ("The Holocaust Tower") She imagines a lover, with personification, such as "crickets crimping". ("The Morning After") "Lolita" was an underage lover of a much older man. If this is the allusion, then she is "like a sleeping child/ across her tousled bed". If this was not intended, then "*on the train*" deals with "evacuation procedures" with a decidedly sexual connotation, followed by an ironic "Sunday stroll", with "a rogue". "Everything Reminds Me of Lolita (H.H.)". A child is subordinated by "The sacrosanct male need". ("Street Performer", p. 39) There is a vanishing point, a child-like man, a bomber. ("Gaping Breach of Property") Nostalgia for the nineteen-forties or fifties is tempered by newsreels, so that decades following also are lacking. ("The Glass Half Empty") The toys of war have been more than invented. A mother contemplates the Biblical Job, "It's my job", to protect her son. ("Boy with Lego"). The advent of the Twin Towers' destruction has changed the culture. ("The Devil in the Details"). Morning brings with it personification of "morning heaved", "exhausted grass", and her painting "intensified" to meet the challenges presented by the universe of events. ("Morning with Paintbrush")

In part II ii a subsection of II the poet relies on Oscar Wilde to give her perspective about "gridlock" in her failed relationship. ("Post-mortem") A prose poem appears as a case study of failed schooling, "as though his brain were a cabbage, she is helping/ to grow." ("School") Calculus "engineers time", ("you solving for x"), while bullies are eventually defeated. ("Study of My Son Doing Homework") The poet appreciates "the blue seep of ink through a page." (p. 52) Pruning is ineffective for adolescent boys, science fails. ("When Night Takes Me") "Pathology Reports" is issued as 1 and 2. In "1" there is a found poem of *Clinical Information*, followed by an imagined description of the *Specimen*. In "2" the symbolist poet Arthur Rimbaud adjusts the Descartes "I think I am, therefore I am" to "*I believe that I am in hell, therefore I am there.*" This is and is not a crime scene. "The shoes,/ according to your file, are pointed west." The shoes are not ruby like Dorothy's in the Wizard of Oz but are blue, telling, and "So's the prognosis."

(p. 57) The test results are feared. (“The Gene”) The child-like self wants Tinkerbell, but the husband must imagine his wife’s mastectomy. (“Diptych”) The last rites seem uneventful somehow. The movie “Life of Pi” yields hope and popcorn. “The Hottest Car” refers back to “I see my Mazda/ on the lot” (“Pattern”, p. 6), much as “Scale” refers back to the deficiency of schooling. However, the poet is reading a bustle-bursting romance novel, an ambivalent queen, like a wife, “a glimpse of God”. (p. 60) She dreams of God like F. Scott Fitzgerald, “scribbling/ onto pigskin his unprecedented ideas for a Book.” (p. 61) The television is recalled “as the bulging eye”. (p. 62) Banal conversation (“Dinner Party”) is contrasted with how the universe continues despite death. (“5:00 a.m. the Day of Your Mother’s Funeral”) The poet, even as a child, noticed (and recorded) everyday details. (“Night Drive”) Lawren Harris’ painting “Above Lake Superior” inspired the poem “Barkwoodby”, with various shades of colour and meaning. In “Note” after an art installation, the poet replies to the mostly rhetorical question “What I want?” The practice of Reiki with the Great Lotus and The Master distracts the poet. Roadkill is “A humble thing”. (“Daybreak, Georgian Bay”, p. 69) The final poem the poet reveals, “And so I study you/ as an artist” (“Watching You Do Tai Chi at Dawn”, p. 70)

Among the endnotes we learn that “Space” was inspired by the alleged abuse of a two-year-old Edmonton girl by her parents in 2012. “Collage: came from “bits and pieces”, some of which were verbatim and others adapted, from several cited sources. “Figure and Ground” was adapted from a short film. “Colour” is a riff on a line from *How Fiction Works*, much as the art instruction was utilized. “Morning with Paintbrush” was composed before the Sandy Hook School shooting on December 14, 2012. An Epicurus quotation was adapted, “I was not, I was, I am not, I care not.” Finally, “Backwoodby” a tribute to Lewis Carroll, employs nonsense words randomly generated by a computer. Among the acknowledgements, a multidisciplinary performance of “City of Everything” occurred on April 26, 2013, in Montreal. The poet was inspired a Georgian Bay cottage, where she wrote some of these poems.

Souaid was shortlisted for the A.M. Klein Prize for Poetry and the Pat Lowther Memorial Award. Her videopoem “Blood is Blood” won a prize at the ZEBRA Poetry Film Festival in Berlin. She was poetry editor for Signature Editions and she co-founded Poetry Quebec, the first online review showcasing English-language poetry and poets of Quebec. In 2013 she had a seven-week writer’s residency at the Banff Centre where she worked on a novel. She has an M.A. in Creative Writing from Concordia University

