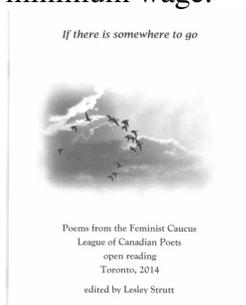


## News from the Feminist Caucus, by Anne Burke

Thank you to Jude Neale, Joan Shillington, Vanessa Shields, and Sheri-D Wilson (alternate) as jurors of the Pat Lowther Memorial Award in the coming year. Next year's Fem Caucus Panel topic will bring together Women, Poetry & Multi-Media collaborations of Spoken Word and Print. This month, a summary of our 2015 panel, news from Susan McCaslin and new Associate Member Reta Muir Dobbs; my reviews of books by New Members: *Eigenheim*, by Joanne Epp; *Braided Skin, Poems* by Chelene Knight; and *chaos inside: thunderstorms*, by Garry Gottfriedson. His collection is dedicated to the Secwepemc women activists, known as "Shuswap" a nation from which he was born. In addition, we have news from [www.catherinefilloux.com](http://www.catherinefilloux.com), on the Human Rights Studies Online Collection. Catherine Filloux has been commissioned by the Wiener Staatsoper (Vienna State Opera) to write the libretto for composer Olga Neuwirth's ORLANDO, based on the novel by Virginia Woolf. The premiere is scheduled for December 2019.

The Living Archives Series of chapbooks grew by two titles this year, and there will be a Women Mentoring/Women Mentoring chapbook in 2016. There is a marketing plan to promote *Cautionary Tales* at The Toronto Reference Library since they have a big senior outreach. June is Senior Citizen's Month and June 15 is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. As I write, there is a new NDP Government in Alberta which has pledged, among other things, to introduce a Women's Ministry, to deal with gender inequalities and the minimum wage.



During the agm we launched *Cautionary Tales: Giving Voice to the Elders* and *If There is Somewhere to Go: Poems from the Feminist Caucus*, Open Reading, Toronto, 2014. All titles are only \$10 (one free and others \$8 if you are a contributor).

There is a marketing plan to promote *Cautionary Tales* at The Toronto Reference Library since they have a big senior outreach. June is Senior Citizen's Month and June 15 is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

**Previous Living Archives anthologies are:**

**2005 "And no one knows the blood we share": Poems from the Feminist Caucus**



**2007 Arms Like Ladders: "The Eloquent She": Poems from the Feminist Caucus**



**2011 Epiphanies: "Moments in Your Writing Life Which Change You Forever"**  
**Epiphanies**



Edited by Anne Burke  
Living Archives of the Feminist Caucus  
League of Canadian Poets

**Women Mentoring/Mentoring Women 2015 will be Volume Two and available for sale in spring 2016**



**VOLUME ONE OF MENTORS WAS: "Dialogues, Exchanges, Conversations": of Women Poets and Their Male Mentors (who supported our Womanhood, Feminist Poetics, and Writing).**

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"My Mentor", by Jenna Butler

"The Light Alive", by Louise Carson

"Mentors", by Jennifer Footman

"On Fred Cogswell", by Candice James

"My Fierce Male Mentor", by Bernice Lever

The Feminist Caucus panel, brief Business Meeting, and Open Reading were on Saturday May 30 from 1:15 - 2:45 p.m. Our business meeting (1/2 hour) to plan the 2016 Panel and an Open Reading followed the panel in the same room.

## Women Mentoring/Mentoring Women



**1:15 Kerry Ryan** introduces herself, welcomes audience, sets the stage with a few words about mentorship and introduces panelists.

### **Di Brandt bio:**

Di Brand is the multiple award-winning author and editor of more than a dozen books of poetry, fiction, creative essays and literary criticism. Her most recent poetry collection is *Walking to Mojacar*, with French and Spanish translations by Charles Leblanc and Ari Belathar.

### **Liz Howard bio:**

Liz Howard was born and raised in rural Northern Ontario and is currently a poet and cognition research officer in Toronto. She is co-curator of the feminist reading series AvantGarden and graduate of the MFA program in Creative Writing from the University of Guelph. Her chapbook *Skullambient* (Ferno House Press) was shortlisted for the 2012 bp Nichol Chapbook Award. In 2014 she was invited to read at Princeton University as part of *The Rhythm Party*, a colloquium organized by the poet Lisa Robertson and the Department of English. Her first full-length collection, *Infinite Citizen of the Shaking Tent*, is from McClelland & Stewart in April 2015.

### **Sally Ito bio:**

Sally Ito is a poet and fiction writer. She was born in Taber, Alberta, and currently lives in Winnipeg. She has published three books of poetry, *Frogs in the Rain Barrel*, *A Season of Mercy*, and *Alert to Glory*, as well as a collection of short stories called *Floating Shore*. Ito has also studied in Japan, and has done translations of contemporary

Japanese poetry. She teaches creative writing in Winnipeg and is a former blog contributor to the multicultural children's literature blog and website, PaperTigers.

**1:25** Kerry intros Di's presentation.

Winnipeg is the home of MAWA, an exemplary network of professional and emerging professional women artists, who sponsor numerous mentorships, conferences, and other events for, by and with professional and emerging professional women artists each year. They have been going for 25 years, and have a very broad and robust membership and support base, and their own office space on Main Street.

I think the professional writing community should consider a similar network for women mentoring/mentoring women, at both the local and national levels, in this day and age when many of the feminist gains we worked so hard for in literary circles in the 70s and 80s are being eroded through funding cutbacks, or else being absorbed into academic networks with their institutional agendas. I have written up a brief proposal for what such a network might look like in the literary field, and will pass this out with the hope that there will be further discussion about this throughout the AGM, and perhaps we could make something like this happen through the League over the next year. For the rest of my presentation, I'd like to talk about the two most important literary women mentors in my life, Dorothy Livesay and my late grandmother Aganetha Zacharias, and how their mentorship influenced my literary career.

Di presents.

**1:35** Kerry intros Liz's presentation.

Liz will discuss the mentorship she received (both formally and informally) and on the importance of walking, engagement with site and community, and writing an embodied text.

Liz presents.

**1:45** Kerry intros Sally's presentation.

Sally will be speaking about "Translation as a Collaborative Art Practice", with reference to her work with the text of a Japanese children's poet as well as a joint project to translate works by a 17<sup>th</sup> century German poet.

My topic on the panel will be about 'Translation as a Collaborative Art Practice' where I will refer to my work translating the poetry of Japanese children's poet Misuzu Kaneko with my aunt, Michiko Tsuboi, as well as working with fellow German-reading poets Sarah Klassen and Joanne Epp to translate the 17<sup>th</sup> century German poet, Catharina

Regina Von Greiffenberg. Bringing the work of women poets from the past into English through collaboration with other women poet-translators has been a real delight for me, and I think it is possible that more of this kind of mentoring and collaborative work can be done with poets who have second languages. I've also done some work reciting and performing the poetry of Tagore with an Indo Canadian artist, Nandita Selvanathan who can translate from the Sanskrit and Bengali into English.

**1:55- 2:15** Kerry will moderate questions from the floor. If there aren't many questions, we will take questions from other panelists and the chair. Panel Coordinator Sonja Grecko adds: Di, Liz and Sally, please come with one or two questions you would like to ask one another. I will also prepare some general questions on mentorship in advance, as well as questions specific to your presentations.

2:15 panel wraps and session moves on to Feminist Caucus Business Meeting (to plan 2016 Panel and Open Reading).

CATHERINE FILLOUX is an award-winning playwright who has been writing about human rights and social justice for over twenty years. Recent productions include: **Selma '65**, her play about the civil rights movement and the KKK, at La MaMa in New York City, where she is an Artist in Residence; **SELMA '65** is now touring the country through 2016. **Luz** also premiered at La MaMa and played at Looking for Lilith in Louisville, Kentucky. **Luz** is published by NoPassport Press. Catherine went on an overseas reading tour to Sudan and South Sudan organized by the University of Iowa's International Writing Program; and her play **The Beauty Inside** was produced in Northern Iraq, in the Kurdish language, by ArtRole.

Filloux has been commissioned by the Wiener Staatsoper (Vienna State Opera) to write the libretto for composer Olga Neuwirth's **ORLANDO**, based on the novel by Virginia Woolf. The premiere is scheduled for December 2019. She was the Playwright Facilitator for the 8th Annual International Playwright Retreat at La MaMa Umbria in Italy. Catherine is on the Advisory Board and an Editor for Alexander Street Press's Human Rights Studies Online Collection. In Development: Musical **All Dressed Up and Nowhere to Go** with Composer Jimmy Roberts (**I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change**) and John Daggett (**Lemkin's House**), based on her play; and a new play **KIDNAP ROAD**; directed by Stan Cahill, starring Kimber Riddle and Steve Guevara, sound design by Darren R. Sussman, movement coach Michael L. Thomas.

Catherine has joined the faculty at Vassar College in the Department of Drama as the Playwriting Instructor. Filloux's commissioned libretto, **New Arrivals**, premiered at Houston Grand Opera, Song of Houston, composed by John Glover. Catherine traveled to Belfast, Northern Ireland for the Henry Smith Artist in Residence Programme in Woodvale Cambrai Community Centre and Holy Cross/Wheatfield Primary Schools, with The Playhouse Derry~Londonderry.

Filloux's more than twenty plays have been produced in New York and around the world. They include: **Dog and Wolf** (59E59 Theaters/Watson Arts, NYC, 2010); **Killing the**

**Boss** (Cherry Lane Theatre, NYC, 2008); **Lemkin's House** (Rideau de Bruxelles, Belgium, 2007, McGinn-Cazale Theatre & 78th Street Theatre Lab, NYC, 2006, Kamerni teatar 55, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 2005); **The Beauty Inside** (New Georges, NYC and InterAct, Philadelphia, 2005); **Eyes of the Heart** (National Asian American Theatre Co., NYC, 2004); **Silence of God** (Contemporary American Theater Festival, WV, 2002); **Mary and Myra** (CATF, 2000 and Todd Mountain Theater, NY, 2002); **Arthur's War** (commissioned by Theatreworks/USA, NYC, 2002); **Photographs From S-21**, a short play that has been produced throughout the world and **Escuela del Mundo** (commissioned by The Ohio State University and touring Ohio in 2006-2005).

**The Beauty Inside** was translated into Arabic for a workshop at ISADAC in Rabat, Morocco, 2004. "Dog and Wolf" Community Outreach Project is a new model conceived by the playwright in 2010, produced by Watson Arts, to bring theater to neighborhoods where theatergoing isn't necessarily part of everyday culture.

Filloux wrote the libretto for **Where Elephants Weep** (Composer Him Sophy) an opera, which received its premiere in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, in 2008. She is the librettist for **The Floating Box: A Story in Chinatown** (Composer Jason Kao Hwang), which opened at Asia Society in New York City and was selected as a Critics Choice in Opera News in 2005, released by New World Records.

Awards include: Ethelwyn Doolittle Justice and Outreach Committee grant, Voice Award for Artistic Works (Voices of Women), New Generations-Future Collaborations Award (Mellon Foundation/TCG), PeaceWriting Award (Omni Center for Peace), Roger L. Stevens Award (Kennedy Center), Eric Kocher Playwrights Award (O'Neill), MAP Fund (for **The Breach** and **The Floating Box**), 5-time Heideman Award Finalist (Actors Theatre of Louisville) and the Callaway Award (New Dramatists). She is a Fulbright Senior Specialist (Cambodia & Morocco), Asian Cultural Council Grant and LMCC Manhattan Community Arts Fund and Fund for Creative Communities recipient. She served as a Juror for Sarajevo's MES International Theater Festival and as a James Thurber and William Inge Center for the Arts Playwright-In-Residence. She is a Core Writer (The Playwrights' Center) and New Dramatists alumna. She developed the Oral History Project A Circle of Grace with the Cambodian Women's Group at St. Rita's Refugee Center in Bronx, NY. She has provided French-English translations for various theater companies and periodicals. Catherine developed her play **Eyes of the Heart** for Lifetime TV.

Filloux's plays are published by Playscripts, Smith & Kraus, Vintage, DPS and Prentice Hall. Her anthologies include **Silence of God and Other Plays**, published by Seagull Books, London Limited and **Dog and Wolf & Killing the Boss, two plays by Catherine Filloux**, NoPassport Press. Her articles have appeared in periodicals including American Theatre, Manoa, and The Drama Review. Catherine received her M.F.A. in Dramatic Writing from Tisch School of the Arts at New York University and her French Baccalaureate in Philosophy with Honors in Toulon, France. Filloux is featured in the documentary film "**Acting Together on the World Stage**" co-created by Dr. Cynthia E. Cohen and filmmaker Allison Lund, in collaboration with Theatre Without Borders.



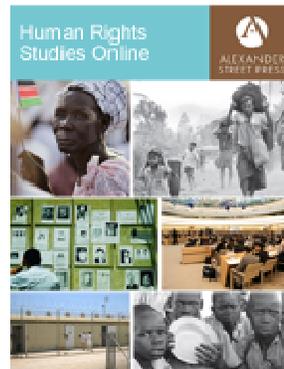
Filloux is a co-founder of Theatre Without Borders and has served as a speaker for playwriting and human rights organizations around the world.

<http://www.catherinefilloux.com/>

Catherine's new book, *LUZ*, with an introduction by José Zayas

[Human Rights Studies Online Collection](#)

Advisory Board/Editor, Alexander Street Press



### **Members' News: League of Canadian Poets Susan McCaslin**

Susan McCaslin toured in April with fellow Inanna Publications author, League member, and poet Pam Galloway to Prince George and Vanderhoof, British Columbia, and on to the Gulf Islands (Gabriola and Galiano). Susan has been reading from her mixed-genre spiritual autobiography, *Into the Mystic: My Years with Olga*, and Pam from her new volume of poetry *Passing Stranger*, both of which were launched earlier in Toronto and Vancouver. The University of Manitoba is currently archiving the fonds of Olga Park, the spiritual mentor Susan writes about in her current memoir.

Susan has had poems and essays published recently in the anthology *Creative Aging* (Ed. Karen Close & Carolyn Cowan. Kelowna, British Columbia: Okanagan Institute, 2015); *The Cascadia Review*; and *Dialogue: Canada's Independent Voices Magazine* (Ed. Maurice J. King & Janet K. Hicks., Vol. 28, No. 3; Nanaimo, B.C.). She blogged about the process of writing her memoir on the Inanna and two other websites: "What's So Scary about Words like Religion, Spirituality, and Mysticism?"

<http://inanna.ca/blog-and-media/blog/whats-so-scary-about-words-religion-spirituality-and-mysticism-some-reflections-writing-mystic-my-years-olga/>

She read at The Creative Nonfiction Society's Conference in Victoria, and attended the Cascadia Poetry Festival in Nanaimo, April 30- May 3<sup>rd</sup> in Nanaimo, B.C., blogging about the festival afterward: "Ecotopias and Big Dreaming," a blog on the Cascadia Poetry Festival, Nanaimo, B.C., 11 May 2015. <http://cascadiapoetryfestival.org/news>; and <http://cascadiapoetryfestival.org/by-susan-mccaslin>

She facilitated a writing workshop, "Into the Mystic: Transforming the Personal Through Writing," at the Canadian Memorial Centre for Peace on Sunday May 24. Excerpts from her Interview, "My Memorization Practice," appeared in *The Other 23 & a Half Hours: Or Everything You Wanted to Know that Your MFA Didn't Teach You*. Ed. Catherine Owen. *Hamilton: Ontario: Wolsak & Wynn*, 2015.

Susan's new chapbook, *effortful / effortless: after Cézanne*, is forthcoming at the end of May through The Alfred Gustav Press, a micro-series of poetry chapbook published by David Zieroth, North Vancouver, B.C. <http://d-zieroth.squarespace.com/the-alfred-gustave-press/>

#### **Also From Susan McCaslin:**

I attended the Cascadia Poetry Festival in Nanaimo, B.C. recently and ended up writing a short blog afterwards about my experience of being with ecologically-minded poets. Feel free to repost this blog in the next newsletter and/or reprinting it in the Feminist Caucus report. If the League reprints it, as a courtesy, please acknowledge that it was first published on the Cascadia poetry festival site with a link to their website. Do let me know if and when you reprint it or post link to it, as I'd like to keep track of where it is published for my records.

Here's the link to the piece:

<http://cascadiapoetryfestival.org/news>

Warmly,

Susan

*"Even more than bread we now need poetry, in a time when it seems that it is not needed at all."* Leon Staff

## Ecotopias and Big Dreaming

May 11, 2015

by **Susan McCaslin** “You may say I’m a dreamer but I’m not the only one I hope someday you’ll join us and the world will be as one.” John Lennon from “Imagine”

The Cascadia Poetry Festival in Nanaimo, British Columbia (April 30-May 3, 2015) was a rich conjoining of ecologically-minded poets from the States and Canada who identify with the richly diverse bioregion named Cascadia that stretches from southeast Alaska to northern California. The premise of the conference was that our common grounding in the land—in place—allows us to transcend political lines and demarcations; that as poets, we are part of the larger ecosystems that flow within and through us. David McCloskey, geographer, and founder of the Cascadia Institute, presented a map of Cascadia, decades in the making, delineating the geographic history of this bioregion. David spoke eloquently of how sea, land and sky form an integral unity.

A related theme of the conference had to do with “linguistic mappings.” B.C. poet Robert Bringhurst, known for his translations of Haida epics, observed that languages are ecosystems, revelations of the ecologies of the earth. He proposed that school children should be taught at least one aboriginal language. These indigenous languages, he urged, need to be preserved not only for First Nations communities but for all. Entering into the language, myths, and stories of the First Nations could deepen our ways of seeing, knowing, and being in the world.

While I applauded I thought to myself: now we’re into big, deep-time dreaming. During the response period, I commended Robert for his thesis, but questioned whether such a proposal might seem “utopian” to many, especially in light of the current cuts to education in BC. I could practically hear my daughter, a young educator in the BC school system who worked with aboriginal children as a tutor, saying: “I’d love to see this happen, but it’s not very likely right now. Maybe we could start by introducing kids to more of the indigenous myths and stories.” Bringhurst pointed out that aboriginal languages are already being taught in some Canadian universities. His response reminded me that big dreams and visions begin with incremental steps. The focus needn’t be on near-term outcomes, but on doing what must be done to bring about restoration. Okanagan poet Harold Rhenisch commented that Cascadia has long been a place of utopian colonies and dreams.

When I taught English at a community college in the lower mainland of B.C., I offered a course on dystopian and utopian literature. Dystopian literature explores recognizable terrains of hellish enclosure. George Orwell’s *1984*, Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*, Yevgeny Zamyatin’s *We*, and Atwood’s *MaddAddam* trilogy spring to mind.

Yet it is utopian rather than dystopian literature that continues to draw me in: Plato’s *The Republic*, Sir Thomas More’s *Utopia*, William Morris’ *News from Nowhere*, and Ursula Le Guin’s *Always Coming Home*. The inventory stretches on. Despite utopian imaginings

and actual experiments, we haven't had the kingdom of heaven on earth, at least not for any great length of time. When Plato tried to enact historically the ideas expressed in his *Republic*, Dion of Syracuse, the young man he trained for the job of being the first philosopher king, morphed into a petty tyrant. Plato's utopia seemed flawed to me because it excluded the poets. The notion of philosophers ruling appealed, but only if they lived up to their names as "friends of wisdom." More often the adage "power corrupts" seems to apply.

One question I've pondered for decades is: Why do utopian experiments generally fail? From Brook Farm in nineteenth-century New England, to Coleridge's dream of Pantocracy, to the Finnish utopian community of Sointula on Malcolm Island off Vancouver Island (founded 1901), these forays into alternative living generally fall prey to economic crises, clashing egos, power hunger, and cultishness. In a recent documentary written and directed by Jerry Rothwell on the Greenpeace movement, *How to Change the World*, what fascinated me was not only the amazing story of how a small group of activists succeeded in stopping the whale hunt, but how the various leaders soon fractured into vying factions.

Some might say the problems all come down to "human nature," meaning the propensity of humans to act out of egotism, self-centredness, greed, and the desire for power rather than empathy and a sense of commitment to the public good, not just the public good for humans, but that of other species and the planet. Ecological poets sense these various dimensions can't be separated. I'm not the only one to feel that the human species is in the middle of a collective crisis where we either transform and reverse our mass destructiveness, or hasten our extinction through our desire for unlimited development.

Even though utopias mostly fail, we require the unfettered utopian imagination. Environmental activist and Buddhist teacher Joanna Macy speaks of "a great turning" where humans might join together to put their creative energies, their collective imagination for a better world into action. I don't know whether we have reached a place where it's too late to turn things around, but, whatever the case, we have to try. Big dreaming isn't based on prediction or certainty, but on envisioning alternative realities. The capacity to counter-dream the cultural malaise is innate. William Blake proclaimed, "Imaginary things are real." What I think he meant is that if you can imagine something, it is a perceptual reality in some dimension of being. We live not knowing outcomes, but with awareness that how we act and how we choose to be matters.

Etymologically, the word utopia means "nowhere," not a topos or place. A cynic might counter that utopias are projects based on wishful thinking. Yet another way of looking at "nowhere" is that it is a place that begins within the heart (so is at first invisible) but reaches everywhere. Some think of utopian notions as mere mental constructs, abstract, static, and unrealizable. But what if utopian visions of nowhere are indeed everywhere, forged in the heart and reified in the bloodstream? Perhaps true utopias aren't plucked from beyond, out of the sky, or out of our heads, but arise within us through our connection with the earth itself. Perhaps they aren't idealized places free from conflict but places where creative energy lives within the tensions and paradoxes in order to forge

newness. If this is so, then utopia might just be the “no place” that is a “here and now place” within consciousness and within the world. If we walk into the woods, the forests, into what remains of wilderness, we might begin once again experience the world directly and realize that it is we who have removed ourselves from paradise. From there the journey home might begin.

“Poetry makes nothing happen,” a statement by W.H. Auden often lifted out of context, can be misleading. Poetry consists of words and language at their most vital— lamenting, praising, singing— and has the capacity to change everything. We have the desire and the need to place our creative gifts, our offerings, among the orders of the other creatures and larger eco-systems to which we belong. We all have poetry in our mouths and in our bones. The first cry of an infant is a poetic utterance, an om of being containing all sounds. Our poetic yawps and howls are participations in the poem of the world, a mystery which is constantly emerging out of silence into fuller articulations of being-in-the-world.



**Susan McCaslin** is a Canadian poet who has published thirteen volumes of poetry, including *The Disarmed Heart* (The St. Thomas Poetry Series, 2014), and *Demeter Goes Skydiving* (University of Alberta Press, 2011), which was short-listed for the BC Book Prize and the first-place winner of the Alberta Book Publishing Award (Robert Kroetsch Poetry Award). She has recently published a memoir, *Into the Mystic: My Years with Olga* (Inanna Publications, 2014).

*Susan lives in Fort Langley, British Columbia where she initiated the Han Shan Poetry Project as part of a successful campaign to save a local rainforest.*

Just thought I'd let you know that, as Robert Bringhurst rightly pointed out when he responded to my question from the audience at the Cascadia Poetry Festival, bringing indigenous languages and world views into the education system is happening right now in universities in Canada. So the notion isn't as “utopian” in the pejorative sense (as unrealistic or difficult) as it might seem. It's happening now. See this article that appeared in today's Vancouver Sun where Wab Kinew is quoted extensively:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/life/Aboriginal+leader+calls+indigenous+education+initiatives/11053412/story.htmlMyCI>

Is there a way to post my above remark about this issue with my previous blog on big visionary dreaming?

All the best,

Susan

**A new Associate Member Reta Muir Dobbs** was born in the former British Colony of British Guiana, now Guyana, in South America. She grew up on a Sugar Plantation, educated privately, graduated, and worked as a nurse. She also was in secretarial and administrative jobs. She raised two children in Canada and volunteered, especially for women and children. From a young age she wrote poetry and prose. She is well-read in history, philosophy, English Literature, Politics. This journey continues for her at the age of ninety. She has produced a large hardcover book and also has some of her poetry and prose recorded. "Joining a prestigious organization, such as The League of Canadian Poets, "can only make her dream of sharing her writing a reality."



**Review of *Eigenheim*, by Joanne Epp (Winnipeg, M.B.: Turnstone Press, 2015) 109 pp. paper**

"Eigenheim" is the name of a rural community west of Rosthern, Saskatchewan, and of the Mennonite Church there. It means "one's own home", since "eigen" is "own, separate, characteristic, peculiar". From Walter Klassen, it "is a place of which we know the centre, but not the circumference". From Anne Szumigalski, this is "the journey of the mind,/ flying from dwelling to dwelling."

In "Catherine", we learn about mortuary "rows of stone/ and names on stones", but "no bones", only voices. ("Names") There are stories about past lives as animals. ("What are you?") This woman haunts and defies all warnings. ("Passage") Her personal belongings are co-opted by strangers. ("Coming home") She appears to follow without hearing. ("The road") She dreams. ("How to remember") She counts snowflakes. ("What slips away") She writes as quickly as she can. ("What remains") Her companion appears. (At the deg of sight") She climbs to catch a word. ("Coming back")

The title poem also appears to refer to the family's name on a gravestone associated with her uncle's burial in August, as well as the second section of the collection entitled "This stone, and this". The preface comes from Patrick Friesen, "who is it you hear as you speak sing as you sing what voices live in you?" In "J.J." she creates word-pictures, its memoir, map, recording, Main Street, 1909, from a photograph. The family album is peopled by Dora and the cousins from Alberta, the children from a pastor, father, farmer ("H.T."). There are mementos of "Elizabeth", who "could bend without breaking". A memory of a lost photo renders a boy ("Photo, 1928"). The Kodak paper preserves "stereoscopic" images. ("Angles of reflection").

In "Catherine", Anne Szumigalski is an abiding spirit. "She knows they are nothing, no bones,/ no blood." ("Names") With knowledge of what, in our ignorance, we used to call senility, she walks at night, somewhat of a phantom, on a moonless night. ("Passage") Indeed, "Coming home" is simply a return to strangers. She dreams and dreams, retracing her memories. Compare "What slips away" with "What remains". The counting, far from home. In a restaurant, or climbing the stairs, since she almost went inside, but didn't.

In "This stone, and this", draws on Patrick Friesen, and "The known world", from Barbara Nickel, "What have I become? The house would know."

In "The house on 10th Street", the poet's experience as a child renders the home immense in dimensions. She role plays. ("Taking turns") The family prays in shifting scenes, such as the Old West, the Future, Middle Earth. ("Table graces") Pre-pubic girls are innocents. ("Summer at the pool") An elegy records the news. ("Incident in August") School lessons are conveyed graphically. ("Instruction") Images come from celluloid, Viewmaster lenses, stereoscopic views. ("Tales from Grandma's house") From age five, grade four and grade nine, she mumbles. ("Shy") She dreams without escape. ("Fifteen") She invokes passion. ("July") An inventory of Dinner for Four ("Wu's Café") reveals a fortune.

"We're in a foreign country" opens with Jan Zwicky's "And you, stumbling at the edges of your self". This section contains prose poems, about "how places forget you" ("First Night"); Martha at the grave of Lazarus ("In the basilica"), her heartache ("In the end"), auditory imagined language ("The rain"), a familiar stranger ("On Yonge Street, yesterday"), words escape (as "Noise"), all those words ("Clues"), quiet as a closed book ("Through a glass"), space inside ("Holding onto gravity").

In "Quietly but much too near" a paradox, she draws on G.K. Chesterton's "...all things have this hair-breadth escape: everything has been saved from a wreck". Without a formal direction ("No map"), they lie restless ("Three o'clock"), insecure ("Encircled"), chimes ("Stories"), conversation stops ("Pause"). A male casts aspersions on a female ("Sitting together, not quite touching"). She anticipates her fall ("Railway bridge, 33rd Street"). Half the words are missing ("Babes in the woods")

Jean Janzen prefaces "Listen", with "all the tones//melding into curve/ and movement-/something I can ride". The words refuse ("Mistrust of language"), silence expands ("Snowstorm"), phrases rise and fall ("Rondo"). She tires to make the sound "fatter" ("Rhapsody no. 2". Dissonance ("Suite Francaise"), crescendos ("Fugue on the Magnificat"), she imagines calamities ("Theme and Variations"). So quiet ("Listen") and prayerful ("Evensong") expectation conclude this section.

The poet adapts "And in some language/ there must be a word for this distance, find it and write it over and over". In "Things I can't get rid of" she ponders distances (from Sue Goyette) in poems "Torn Apart", "The Lost one", "Afterwards", and "Words from one who has not been there".

Finally, Chandra Maylor prefaces "Desire and distance" (Epp's poem) with "Only empty/things fill up again. Now you're ready", for "in search", "Expected", "Nothing to lose" from Luke 15:8, and "Dreaming red lilies".

Epp has a self-published chapbook *Crossings*, 2012. much poetry published in journals and anthologies, *Prairie Fire*, *Dalhousie Review*, *New Quarterly*, *Rhubarb*, *Room of One's Own*, *Contemporary Verse 2*, *Pottersfield Portfolio*, *Antigonish Review*, *Carleton Arts Review*, *Bywords*, *Fireweed*, *Ink magazine*, *Hook and Ladder*. She also reviewed for

*Prairie Fire, Journal of Mennonite Studies, Rhubarb, The Globe and Mail, Other Voices.* She took classes at Sage Hill Writing Experience, Manitoba Writers Guild mentoring program, Toronto Writing Workshop. She was a board member of Prairie Fire, Manitoba Writers Guild, Associate Member, League of Canadian Poets, Saskatchewan Writers Guild, and Manitoba Writers Guild.



**Review of Braided Skin, Poems by Chelene Knight (Salt Spring Island, B.C.: mothertongue press, 2015), 85 pp. paper.**

The collection contains an epigraph from Toni Morrison, with other allusions to *The Bluest Eye*. The structure depends on “Strand 1, “The Skin”, 2, “The Music”, and 3. “The City”. There are admittedly found poem elements from *Autobiography of My Mother*, by Jamaica Kincaid, drawn at random, *The Elements of Style*, by William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White, *Idi Amin Dada: Hitler in Africa* by Thomas and Margaret Melady; erasure poems from a local brew pub craft beer menu, Rachel Lebowitz’s *Cottonopolis*. In one instance, she cut her source text into words and phrases; then cut her own poem into eight separate lines. “All the words, phrases, and sentences were mixed together and drawn at random to compile this piece and to create an interesting use of syntax.” (“Sheds Wings on Monday Mornings” and” Notes and Acknowledgements”, p. 84).

Knight appears to excel in the art of the prose poem. The political actualized in compelling images (“Uganda 1972”), racial shades of imagined beauty, she rejects the calculation of “the paper bag rule”, involving light skin and dark skin for both Mean on women and Women on men. (“In the Green Room Part 2, The Voice Insider Her Hair”). In the title poem she blends taste with sight, her muse is her body imbedded and even scarred by stories, a fear-soaked journey from Uganda. (“Braided Skin”). The language of correspondence is heightened (“Cotton Candy”). Socio-economic issues (“Dear Current Occupant”).

An “outsider” secretly drawing can be compared to the poet as secret sharer (“The Colouring Book”). The church gives way to noise of the city, separation anxiety about Mama, the secular traffic, “stained glass, faith, and hell. (“Healing Never At All”). The chaos of family and domestic concerns give way to quiet. (“Quick Bread Dream”). A group poem is composed of everyday language and heightened by “my words, my syntax, my smoothness”. (“How To Run Your Fingers Through My Hair”).

The dreams of “hunger is your excuse for taking/ everything that’s white: the fridge, stove, dryer”. (“Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner”). A woman has a fierce appetite, homeless and armed. (“Speak Easy”). Many of these are “just memory” but add up to so much more. (“955 East 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue”). Even “words explode in the mind”. (“Gold Plated Dreams”).

She has previously published in *Raven Chronicles*, *Sassafras Literary Magazine*, and *Room* magazine for which she is poetry coordinator in the poetry and creative nonfiction genres. She works as copy editor for SFU Emerge Student Anthology, a library assistant, columnist, submissions reader, manuscript consultant.

A work in progress is “Dear Current Occupant”, a collection of prose poems and letters in the voice of a young woman who was placed in twenty homes as a child. Some of her family was victimized by the Asian expulsion in Uganda in the 1970s, when there was a campaign conducted for “de-Indianization” and “ethnic cleansing”. She is a single parent currently pursuing her BA in English at SFU where she earned a certificate in creative writing, with The Writers Studio, while putting together an anthology *Emerge*.



**Review of *chaos inside: thunderstorms*, by Garry Gottfriedson (Vancouver, B.C.: Ronsdale Press, 2014) 125 pp. paper.**

The Chaos Inside mirrors the Chaos Outside, gnashing of teeth, and how many levels of hell did Dante imagine. As I write Alberta has been “Occupied” by the NDP, a reversal of history, or history rewriting itself, after decades of conservative status quo yielded to the radical, an element which also permeates our political history. Middle-aged lawyers, accountants, and other conventional professions were represented in our politicians, which has given way to yoga instructors, twenties’-something postsecondary students, homemakers, and others once excluded, who have overtaken the positions of previously-elected government ministries. The progressive on the left replaced the progressive on the right, while the stone-aged Wild Rose is ensconced as the Loyal Opposition.

Peace is fleeting (“In the Forest”). The poet reclaims his territory, “Th’emulu’ps, the Secwepemac name for Kamloops. In “High Priests”, popular culture, such as Christian Dior hems, *On the Road* Kerouac, Ginsberg’s *Howl*, Hollywood, L.A., are blended with Michael Jackson and Stephen Harper. The “Idle No More” movement debunks D.C. Scott’s poetry. Pope Alexander VI in 1493 was responsible for colonial extermination. (“Rendered Natural”). In a state of “Chaos”, Trudeau’s 1969 White Paper was defeated. (“Chaos”). The refrain of “let the dogs” alternates with an imperative voice. (“Dogs of War”). Canada offers only a “pathetic apology/ shoved down the throat”. (“Deaf Heaven”). Residential schools contained misogynists and misandrists, a pedagogy of hate. (“Residential Schools”). The absence of the male principle and presence begets all women who have taken a stand. (“There Are No Chiefs Anymore”). Due to “Activism” “the poet is a targeted muse” for those deserving of being etched in Indian memory. The polemical and the poetry are a careful balancing act because political ideologies can become abstractions without the flesh and bones of human experiences. Fortunately, the poet has accomplished this in several of these poems.

Cultural imperialism is exposed (“Starkly Reverberated”). The explorers practiced legal theft (“From Columbus to Monsanto”). The refrain of “who are” and “who become” is used effectively in “Mining and War”.

Indians learned a foreign language (“English”). Promises were forgotten, by Elijah Harper and the Prime Minister. (“Ceremonial Humiliation”). The cross-country sense of belonging was built on guilt, broken treaties, chronic war dreams. (“Forgotten Soldiers”). When Indian warriors “vanished”, it was then that the role of Aboriginal women rose. (“Our Women”), a matriarchal society. The Self may be assimilated and abandoned. The refrain “there is no white law accurate” effectively evokes injustice (“The Indian Act”). The Self may be assimilated. Each stanza begins with the same conjunction (“Because”). Vowels grumble (“Open Sights”). In the long poem the parties “Theresa and Stephen” dialogue, an interesting exchange which ends “I am not the problem/ you are.” from Stephen. The setting is inside churches and jails (“Inside”).

The meaning of utopia is self-love (“Questions”). Scavengers occupy Gastown (“Crows and Back Alleys”). The East Side Women appear in “Infinite”. Carcasses appear (“A Dream Poem”).

The domestic scene gives way to “that burden” of pain, anger, loss of hope. (“When You Forget”). The title lands itself to a refrain (“This Death Is Different”). The role of the storyteller is ancient but relentless. (“The Storyteller”).

A Feast to Honour the Dead is an ancestral song. (“The Hide-Tanner’s Pole”) His Odyssey is a revisited Homeric journey. A sweat lodge is part of “Cultural Norms”, rather than women in Pocahontas costume. The poet promises “I’ll never bastardize another’s culture/ for the sake of a chimera”.

The bones of the dead speak. (“Dead Girls Talk”). The Highway of Tears” refers to names of those killed, Tea Dance songs in the contexts of Ted Bundy and the Green Mountain killer. He dethrones cowboy poets (“John Wayne”), Jane Doe and John doe (“Dime Store”); the elements of style give way to the elements of life (“Elements of Novel Study”).

The poet has a masters of education from Simon Fraser University and studied creative writing at the Naropa Institute, and currently works as the principal at the Sk’elep School of excellence. Gottfriedson has published seven previous books. His publishers are SCES, Theytus, Thistledown, Partners in Publishing, Ronsdale, and Kegedonce. *Glass Tepee* was nominated for First People’s Publishing Award, 2004, and *Whiskey Bullets* an Anskohk Aboriginal Award Finalist; *Skin Like Mine* was shortlisted for Canadian Authors Literary Award for Poetry 2011. This collection is dedicated to the Secwepemic women activists, known as Shuswap a nation from which he was born.

Alberta had a Cabinet member responsible for women when the province passed the Advisory Council on Women's Issues Act in 1986, the law expired in 1996. The next gathering of representatives on the Status of Women to the annual general meeting is in Winnipeg on June 18. As I write, there is a new NDP Government in Alberta which has pledged, among other things, to introduce a Women's Ministry. The NDP platform pledge is to spend an additional \$50 million on childcare in 2014-15 and promises to move toward a \$25 a-day childcare system. The NDP pledged \$15 million in new funding for

Alberta's women's shelters. New money may go to second-stage shelters. The Party has promised to look into missing and murdered indigenous women. The Minister of the Status of Women will reportedly face a large gender gap, low representation of women on boards, high childcare costs, and low minimum wage. The Ministry will need to promote education and skills transfer to meet the impending economic and labour issues. Thousands of good-paying jobs are lost when investment moves elsewhere in a global market.