

News from the Feminist Caucus, by Anne Burke

Congratulations to the finalists for the Pat Lowther Memorial Award and to all the poets and their publishers who entered the annual competition, as well as the 2014 judges. If you are in Toronto, please plan to join us on Friday, June 6, **at 4 p.m.** for the Open Reading and Business Meeting. Then on Saturday, June 7 **4:15-5:15 p.m.** for the panel *Stories about the forgotten elders, our vulnerable elders – which prompted the panel topic, tentatively subtitled poetry and cautionary tales.* This month, reviews of *Nine Steps to the Door*, by Maureen McCarthy, “*Cold Surely Takes the Wood*”, by Tara Wohlberg; *The New Blue Distance, Poems* by Jeanette Lynes, *Left Fields*, by Jeanette Lynes; *The M Word: Conversations about Motherhood*, edited by Kerry Clare, *Inheritance*, by Kerry-Lee Powell, *The L.M. Montgomery Reader*, edited by Benjamin Lefebvre; *Her Red Hair Rises With The Wings Of Insects, Poems*, by Catherine Graham, and *Once a murderer*, by Zoe Landale. Unfortunately, Deirdre Dwyer's *Going to the Eyestone* and Eric Folsom's *Icon Driven* have just gone out of print.

Review of *Nine Steps to the Door*, by Maureen McCarthy (North Vancouver: The Alfred Gustav Press, 2013) 18pp. paper Series Ten. The Alfred Gustav Press 429B Alder Street North Vancouver, BC V7L 1A9.

The poet divides her strength between a branch and a twig, in order to wade into a stream. A room is depicted as old but like the heart it sleeps. A parrot ex cathedra. The nine steps occur in November. “What do the eyes of others see?” “So what if it’s late, who cares” July possess a “belly”. Insomnia speaks. A sister “buried in the back yard.” The wind calls, “catch her, catch her” A song is not for sale. Birds “scar the sky.” An endless story overcomes the afternoon.

In an “Afterword”, the poet attempts perfection but realizes she can only try, because writing is intuitive, not revisionist. McCarthy has four books of poetry (Harbour Publishing). She contributed to a Mexican anthology of Canadian women writers.

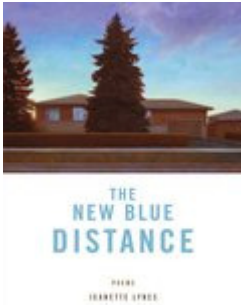
Review of “*Cold Surely Takes the Wood*”, by Tara Wohlberg (North Vancouver: The Alfred Gustav Press, 2013) 18 pp. paper Series Ten.

This chapbook draws on “tattered, five-line” diaries by Leitta Mae Wohlberg (1905-1998) who was the poet’s grandmother. The entries run from 10 February, 1934 to 2 December, 1966. The backdrop is comprised of the economic depression, a rural lifestyle, and the move West to Saskatchewan from her Ontario childhood. The CBC and Biblical Corinthian columns are juxtaposed. Without planned parenthood, women rely on fortunetelling. The King of Clydesdales resembles the crowning of the Prince of Wales. The death of Rudyard Kipling was proclaimed. The Duke of York replaced his brother King Edward VIII who abdicated the throne. The homesteaders move to town. The T.Eaton Company indicates the cost of living when blueprints cost only \$2.50. The fashions advertised in print are compared with toxic hair permanents, war brides, church auxiliaries. Narcissus plays with ice water. Her hair was straight as the horizon. Eaton’s catalogue was attractive to post-war baby boomers. The refrigerator replaced the ice box.

“Mounted” alludes to a strawberry social at Rideau Hall, “so patriotic”. Drugstore-coloured hair matches “The Coat” a Persian Lamb.

In “Afterword”, the poet, a first-born grandchild, explains how she read fifty years about prairie life, a previously untold family story. “Perhaps our two generations share only the brutal geography, rather than a warm bond.”

The Alfred Gustav Press was named after the founder’s father, a farmer and a great lover of winter reading. A subscription is available for \$13 in total for three issues. Contact David Zieroth, dzieroth@telus.net.



Review of *The New Blue Distance*, Poems by Jeanette Lynes (Toronto: Wolsak & Wynn, 2009) 104 pp. paper.

Much of this poetry is bedazzled by grief, in tones of irony, shock, and awe. Even the blue endpapers tucked into this book’s binding offers a visual display of muted distances. In “Passes”, a third-person cautionary tale, reflects young lovers reinventing themselves. The title is a double entendre, while the extended metaphor deals with chapters, illiteracy, giving without restraint, “until giving grew unsound.” The phenomenon of internet dating ironically focuses on its various stages, “Enamoured”, “Less Enamoured”, and “Not Enamoured in the Least”. A triolet is a poem or stanza of eight lines in which the first line is repeated as the fourth and seventh and the second line as the eighth with a rhyme scheme of ABaAabAB. The poet invokes, “We, the fleshy ones”, since consumption results in “love handles, abundant butts”, but “a fat girl could marry a prince”. The “soft rebels” indulge, “snow angels twinned in winter’s fold”. She reads “ourselves”, that is “To recite urns, / remember vows”. Their “new habitat” was rendered in off-white tones, which she subsequently hated. Her reinterpretation of a Hollywood film demonstrates her own development. She discusses anorexia in the context and voice of Simone Weil, who appears self-aware but, nevertheless, died from the disease. (See: also Sarah Klassen’s collection on Weil).

Lynes explores divine agriculture and has “a harvest to tend.” Lesley Hornby (a British Super Model known professionally as “Twiggy”) was notoriously thin. The poet wishes there was a Nobel Prize for feet. Her mother’s inner world was coloured orange, “Truth is, this was a girl’s story”. “I knew everything wants / what I want”, including this “Requiem For a Beagle”. “Three things you can count on in this / life: endings, blood, voices to wreck / your dreams”. The lies abide, “she chirps / *never better*.” The poet embraces popular culture, Glenn Miller’s band, Wife of the cartoon character “Shrek”, Hockey Stars, such as Bobby Orr, and several others, as a device. On a special occasion, “This poem marks the only time / I took his side”, meaning her father’s. Velvet painting exudes a “Small Elegy”.

In the second section she declares “My mother and I are a myth”, and “There are regions of mercy, this is not.” Birch trees become “white rifles, ruddy-barrelled.” She rejects writing in “that hothouse mannered style”, in favour of the “Backwoods”. Distances

reflect “is long-distance farming long-distance love’s / logical outcome?” Her own Braveheart declaims, “*I’m sick of the Celts and all their pain*”. Dolly Parton appears during a tour of Rosslyn Chapel. Madonna is reborn on the side of a two-tiered bus. A quintet is a musical composition or movement for five instruments or voices. It also refers to a group or set of five. In “A Speculative Quintet”, the poet ponders: “The Folk”, “Posing”, “The Almighty”, “The True Meaning of Thunder”, and concludes with “Project Observation Tartan.” Her Beach Boy reunion is only one instance of “The Time-Bubble Theory”. “*the past is past*”.

In the third section, blue-grass bands perform at Dawson Creek, the morning-after feels emptied. Poetics have a mind of their own. “This wanted to be a rock / poem but it’s a water poem”. She puns on “the climax”, associated with Regina. “You hear / the female’s *yes yes yes*, observe / how she agrees with everything,” The mark chooses you, each scar a story. She has a fetish for the west. She takes note of “all this light”, since “Sky expands and expands.” A curling rink is transformed into a granite abbey. However, “this page never betrays me.” A series of causes is listed, “language slips / farther from you, farther, further, how do you know”. The drift of conversation and salt lake accompanies gravity. “I am so local” but she believes in life on other planets.

In the fourth section she explores “What Can Happen When You Love a Poet”. With Elizabeth Smart, then in time and space, London, Germany, Stockholm, San Francisco, New Zealand, Mexico, during the nineteen-thirties. Then she finds her poet, in London, Vancouver, at Pender Harbour, London and Ottawa, Cloch Na Ron during the nineteen-forties. This series concludes with London, in 1955, and an indeterminate “Later, Suffolk”.

In the fifth section, her perspective shifts to “Tell It From The Rabbit’s Point of View”, starting with “I’m dead, speaking of Beatrix Potter to a class”, in 1997. In “Thirteen Poems For Beatrix Potter”, she speaks from the author’s heart and soul, compelling instances of scientific knowledge, social structure which impaired women’s genius, a family unit which reinforced patriarchy. The text presumes to be Potter’s diary, a record of her innermost thoughts, secrets, and repressed passion. Her beloved Norman Warne, publisher, for whom she longs but lost to death. Hill Top Farm which she purchased with her royalties and for which she became a sheep herder and entrepreneur. She did marry William Heelis but “That Miss Potter / is not so very far away.”

The “Notes on the Poems” provide some of the sources for her epigraphs.



Review of *Left Fields*, by Jeanette Lynes (Toronto: Wolsak & Wynn, 2003) 87 pp. paper.

That which comes out of “left field” means oblique or on the periphery; the unexpected but powerful epiphanies of ecstatic experiences. Another level of meaning is “left” as in untilled or abandoned. The epitaph, from Alice Munro’s *Lives of Girls and Women*, offers up the landscape, doomed shapes “like slightly

opened fans, sometimes like harps.” The second, from *All the Blood Tethers*”, by Catherine Sasanov, couples the monotony of rural living, home “collapses in on itself.” In part I “Homeland, With Wreckage”, the questionable act of “Poetry?” makes sense of otherwise inexplicable events, including a dark snake which consumes its live prey. A nine-year-old acknowledges a preacher’s “hell-bent” call on heaven. She learns about her own language of ruin. She can forgive but not forget. This was an era of “Farrah Fawcett”, big teeth, angels. This “long green / tunnel of time” is a trip induced with nostalgia. Poodle barrettes but disfigurement, injury, scars. Peace River and lessons in calligraphy. The Zamboni and “burns of shame”. Some men are drifters. There is always “Beauty Queen Land”. (“Crowning glory”) “Shania” begins as a limerick, until “She writes a poem”. Moving involves “grim / generousities?” A prairie prophet appears in “slithering heat”. Appearances can be deceiving. “A pretender arises”. The poet celebrates Paul Anka and Glen Gould in “Gutter and gloves”. A palindrome represents “this new amalgamated world”. The Bridges of Madison County is referenced (“More bridge shots”) in a “brittle montage”. She parses the word “Brave” with anecdotal evidence.

In Part II “Can Anything Save My Daughter”, the persona of the poet as child in a tableau gives way to that of “*I’m better than your mean mother*” when she adopts a lamb. (“The orphan collector”) Aerial photography depicts crop-dusting, “pail bearers” (a pun on “paul-bearers”), a portrait of post-dated cheques. Cougars replace tigers in the night of Blakean innocence and experience. (She riffs on Barry Dempster’s “*Thick skulls with their dinosaur attitudes*”) about dinosaurs. Coyotes cause dogs to disappear. Mirrors reflect “the silver, snarling air.” Clearly, “*poetry should happen*”. Further, “the cry for poetry *right here right now*”. She personifies the rhetorical in “What the poem wants”: “the poem wants you / to watch while / it drowns”. She riffs on Robert Browning, “I’m alive”. She takes inventory and catalogues “Dead people’s clothes”. Heraclites takes part in Dirty Harry pictures. The diarist records Judgement Day, while the mother remains cheerful. “I will never get over my mother”. “Can anything / save a daughter?” She offers a synopsis of O’Connor’s “Good Country People”. Happy Earth Day renders up a bison, “*Happy happy*”. Horses must be flawless, if we believe in “blonde, rugged guys”. (“The Horse Whisperer”) She hears a coin voice, “drink this – / *this is your life, this is what it costs.*”

In part III “This Is Your Life”, “The new stories” as opposed to those from the past take centre stage. A film reveals “It’s always Judgement Day somewhere”. She looks for markers, such as *Pilgrim’s Progress*, Vikings, *Airstream*, *Endeavour*, and *Dutch Star*. A car may become “our last-legs” along the Trans-Canada. Staged “she-wolf combat” means “we’re all mired”, our lives resemble “It’s a living. I’m a Woman Mud Wrestler”. (“Bog”) Aspirations are managed, such as “to be wizard’s aid, not / The Wizard Himself”. (“Current”) She learns “of lake, love”. The land is “lidded”. Like lilies, “we flutter, membranes with / hummingbird hearts”. Value village clothing. They make their own histories. The mail is “thin mean snail letters”, even in sleep. An ode to Charlotte Bronte reads, “*Pay no attention to the Poet Laureate*”. She writes a pastiche, “after A.M. Klein’s ‘Portrait Of The Poet As Landscape’”, which was, in turn, fashioned after James Joyce. Lost. Or not to be. The rest was insomnia. And drowning, a fashionable motif.

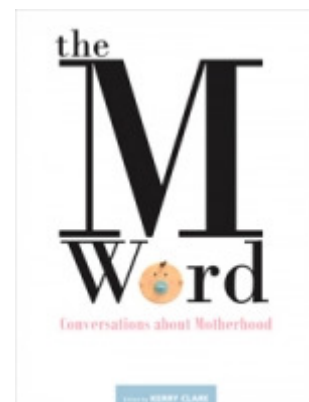
Very T.S. Eliot. “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”. Measuring out his life with coffee spoons. “Lost. Like in the poem”. The craft of a carpenter disguises his art from the poet who merely uses the art as pretty wallpaper “down the page”. “nothing / is something.” The poet imagines herself elsewhere but “When / she opens her eyes, she’s still in her office”. (“Beside herself”) The teacher envies how easily and effortlessly her students compose poems, for example, the happy accident of “*there is a lawyer of dust over everything*” (pun intended). The imagist “Bergamot”, the manifestations of “loosestrife”, in a Ministry of Wild Things. “Feed the blue jay /inside you”. Talk signifiers. “I did the time warp, now I have to pay”. “The hours” is based on Virginia Woolf’s “Mrs. Dalloway” and “seaweed’s / dark scrim”. A seminal moment was “In Flanders Fields”, a poem taught in grade ten, “Detention” meant copying out the dictionary, a punishment much to be devoured. “poppies blow through / only in poems”.

Among the Acknowledgments are poetry awards, Bliss Carman, *Contemporary Verse 2*, and others.

I previously reviewed *A Woman Alone on the Atikokan Highway* (also from Wolsak and Wynn, in 1999) and it was a pleasure to add these two collections to my review titles.

***Review of The M Word: Conversations about Motherhood*, edited by Kerry Clare (Fredericton, N.B. Goose Lane Editions, 2014) 314 pp. paper \$22.95.**

The subtitle refers to conversations derived from *conversari*, “to live, keep company with”, are defined as “1) an oral exchange of sentiments, observations, opinions, or ideas; 2 a) an instance of such exchange,: talk; b) an informal discussion of an issue by representatives of governments, institutions, or groups, c) an exchange similar to conversation, especially real-time interactions with a computer, especially through a keyboard.”



This collection contains such informal essays, shared with like-minded subjects about a common theme, although the perspectives range from childless or child-free, infertile and fertile (five children), with everything in between. However, the reader is only one party to the discourse, because the others are family members, among them aunts, uncles, fathers, brothers, and especially the children themselves (adopted, biological, sperm-challenged/donated). The tone is at once moving, visceral, humourous, tragic, grief-tinged, and heartbreaking.

The editor and contributor respond, “You might ask if the world needs another literary anthology about motherhood, and I would argue that it needs this one.” The collection is dedicated “To our women friends, and all their stories” twenty-four essays, with a “Foreword: The Motherhood Conversations (or ‘Life With a Uterus’),” by the editor, and an “Afterword: Grandmothering”, by Michelle Landberg. This literary anthology bridges the divide between women with children who decide to have no more and women

without who choose to remain child-free, including issues of miscarriages, infertility, single-parenthood, adoption, step-parenting, and IVF costs.

Heather Birrell, author of two short story collections *Mad Hope* and *I know you are but what am I?*, who won the Journey Prize and the Edna Stabler Award, contributed “Truth, Dare, Double Dare”, on two siblings. Julie Brooker, mother of twin daughters who published *Up Up Up* a short story collection in 2011 and is now working on a novel, contributed “Twin Selves”, on twin boys when she was forty-four. Diana Fitzgerald Bryden, author of two books of poetry *Learning Russian*, shortlisted for the Pat Lowther Award and *Clinic Day*; a first novel *No Place Strange* and is working on a second novel *Tunapuna*, contributed “Dog Days” on parenting her sister’s two sons.

Kerry Clare, had her essay “Love is a Let-Down” in *Best Canadian Essays* (2011) short listed for a National Magazine Award, contributed “Doubleness Clarifies” on abortion and subsequently giving birth with a second, wanted pregnancy. Clare alludes to a memoir *Giving Up the Ghost*, by Hilary Mantel and inspired by a novel by Robert Louis Stevenson, about an imagined daughter. She edits 49thShelf, a Canadian books website and writes on her blog *Pickle Me This*. Myryl Coulter, has published an adoption memoir, *The House With the Broken Two: A Birthmother Remembers* (Anvil Press, 2011) which won the Exporting Alberta Award, and contributed “Unwed, Not Dead” on giving up a child for adoption after giving birth in an Unwed Mothers Home during the nineteen-sixties.

Christina Couture, debuted albums *Fell Out of Oz*, *The Wedding Singer and the Undertaker*, *The Living Record*, contributed “These Are My Children”. The opening of her cervix appears as “the os” pre-birth; then is forever changed, as “more slit-like and gaping” after giving birth. “Emmett would be seven and Ford would be four were they both still alive.” Nancy Jo Cullen, who holds an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Guelph Humber, a Journey Prize-nominated fiction writer, author of three collections of poetry from Frontenac House Press, a short-story collection *Canary*, contributed “I Taught My Kids to Talk”. Cullen, originally in a same-sex partnership, is the sole parent of adolescents, “the Sisyphean task”. Her daughter regards feminism as a disease and her son rejects women’s magazines, or worse, “those books” which no one but “really weird strict parents or new parents” read. She won the 2012 Metcalf-Rooke Award and 2010 Writers’ Trust Dayne-Ogilvie Prize for Emerging LGBT Writers. Marita Dachsel, author of *Glossolalia*, *Eliza Roxcy Snow*, and *All Things Said & Done*, contributed “What Can’t Be Packed Away”, her fears and associations with death while raising her three children. Her play *Imitation Trilogy* was nominated for the Jessie Richardson Award for Outstanding New Script and her poetry for the Robert Kroetsch Award for Innovative Poetry and the ReLit Prize.

Nicole Dixon, who won the Writers’ Trust of Canada RBC Bronwen Wallace Award for Emerging Writers, published her first book, a collection of stories *High-Water Mark*. author of *Glossolalia*, *Eliza Roxcy Snow*, and *All Things Said & Done*, contributed “Babies in a Dangerous Times: On Choosing to be Child-Free” about “To breed or not to breed.” Dixon wrote an essay for *Canadian Notes & Queries* about the disappearance of

feminism from Canadian Literature, women in novels have become passive, a signifier for the loss of women's rights in society. She read Corinne Maier's *No Kids: 40 Good Reasons Not To Have Children*.

Ariel Gordon, whose chapbook *How to Make a Collage* won Kalamalka Press John Lent Poetry-Prose Award, contributed "Primipara" a poem and article about her child's birth without siblings. For her partner, "having one kid was enough", because he was an only child. Her scientist mother was one of five children. Gordon's second collection of poetry, *Stowaways*, will be published in spring 2014. Amy Lavender Harris, author of *Imagining Toronto* which was short-listed for the Gabrielle Roy Prize and won the 2011 Heritage Toronto Award of Merit, contributed "A Natural Woman" about how she overcame infertility due to PCOS, an endocrine disorder, in this post-feminist era. She alludes to "A Cyborg Manifesto", by biologist and feminist social theorist Donna Haraway, who argues against both patriarchal and feminist perspectives, about gender and science. Harris has a next book, *Acts of Salvage*. Fiona Tinwei Lam, author of two poetry books, *Intimate Distances* (a finalist for the City of Vancouver Book Award) and *Enter the Chrysanthemum*, contributed "The Best Interests of the Child". She is a single mother having been raised by a single mother. She co-edited the literary non-fiction anthology *Double Lives: Writing and Motherhood* and edited *The Bright Well: Contemporary Canadian Poetry about Facing Cancer*.

Deanna McFadden, who develops content and manages an e-book program, wrote "The Girl on the Subway", about how reality supersedes her initial observations (Before and After) and she has an unpublished novel. Maria Meindl, author of *Outside the Box: The Life and Legacy of Writer Mona Gould, the Grandmother I thought I Knew*, wrote "Junior" about a fibroid tumour and won the Alison Prentice Award for women's history. She made two radio series. Saleema Nawaz, the author of *Mother Superior*, a short story collection, and a novel *Bone and Bread*, which won the 2013 Quebec Writers' Federation Paragraphe Hugh MacLennan Prize for Fiction, also wrote "Bananagrams", a comparison of her experiences as a step-parent.

Susan Olding, whose *Pathologies: A Life in Essays* won the Creative Nonfiction Collective's Readers' Choice Award for 2010, wrote "Wicked" about step-mothering and adopting a child. Alison Pick, whose novel *Far to Go* won the Canadian Jewish Book Award for fiction and was nominated for the Man Booker Prize, wrote "Robin" about a miscarried child. Heidi Reimer, who has published short stories and essays in several journals, wrote "The Post-Maia World", about an adopted child and a biological child. Kerry Ryan, the author of *The Sleeping Life* and *Vs* both collections of poetry, wrote "Confessions of a Dilly-Dallying Shilly-Shallier", says she writes poetry because she lacks the stamina for novels or even short stories.

Carrie Snyder, author of two collections of short fiction was a finalist for the 2012 Governor General's Award for Fiction, blogs and wrote "How to Fall", about having four children, "It was the feminist in me". Patricia Storms, an editorial cartoonist and author/illustrator, composed "You Make 'Em, I Amuse 'EM". Sarah Yi-Mei Tsiang, author of poetry books *Status Update* and *Sweet Devilry*, won the Gerald Lampert

Award. She edited the anthology *Desperately Seeking Susans* and *Tag: Canadian Poets at Play*. She wrote “Mommy Wrote a Book of All My Secrets”, who questions appropriation of voice is using direct experience rather than fiction. Priscila Uppal, who has nine collections of poetry, critically-acclaimed novels, and her memoir *Projection: Encounters with My Runaway Mother*, wrote “Footnote to the Poem ‘Now That All My Friends Are Having Babies: A Thirties Lament’”, two men are invited to a baby shower which makes the hostess feel awkward. Julia Zarankin, who has stories and essays in journals, wrote “Leaving the Eighteenth Floor”, experiences infertility treatments but imagines she is an otherwise normal person.

Michele Landsberg, a feminist and activist, wrote “Afterwards: Grandmothering”, reveals that “Aging itself was a puzzle; no matter how relentlessly the years passed, I felt the same young self looking out of my eyes.” Landsberg is a feminist and activist who wrote columns for *The Toronto Star* for twenty-five years. She won two National Newspaper Awards. She published four books. In 2002 she won the Governor General’s Medal. She is an Officer of the Order of Canada

The collection also contains Notes, Acknowledgements, and Contributor Bionotes.

Review of *Inheritance*, by Kerry-Lee Powell (Windsor, Ontario: Biblioasis, spring 2015) 71 pp. paper from proofs.

The title poem is only three evocative lines based on Shakespeare’s King Lear. Throughout this collection, there are underpinnings of ghosts, skulls of seals, Beethoven’s Emperor Symphony, an aria, a lunatic, buskers and beggars. The family chin brings with it madness and grudges. As “if he was [were] the last monster, the last god”, the lineage of Hitlers plays out. The poet relies on her single parent father, brother, as though they were wrecked at sea, and he was drowned each night, “among singing men” in a lifeboat. Layton’s tragedy, while somewhere far off a child blows out birthday candles for the world is rebooted as this small breath “of a child blowing a candle-wish”. Her own ghosts abide in suburban houses. Darkness is “roiling”, “crest”, “trough”, from which there is no haven of light.

In vino veritas (“Whiskey Mantra”) and the fandango dance, the god Narcissus is “skinnydipping” in a realm without time. Both the replica and the counterfeit, “We’ll feast forever – kin upon kin –”. (“Silver Devils”) The poet makes effective use of figurative imagery, simile, and personification to express the central, unifying theme, with internal rhyme (“A blur of fur”, “unfurled” / “burled”). The imagist “Two Views of a Stag” is fashioned as an inborn god of the room. The longer poem “Malefic” plays on maleficent and maleficence as well as “male”, using parallel structure. A woman reduced to a struggling bundle locked in his car trunk; his “unkempt” room while she is “a bird in a chimney”. He is “a looming angel”, she reaches for escape. She a weighted sack, he remains an unknown perpetrator.

The Biblical Magdalene is treated like a witch. Glass doves raise a sound. A cubicle has a background chorus. (“The Ladies’ Room is Always Haunted”) The scene shifts to coyote

and canyon. The metaphysical conceit of a mandrake root hails a hospital death, “as monotonous as your laboured rasp”, in this instance, of her grandfather, “Your blood, my first romance” (“Inhuman”). The rich expect sexual services from the poor. Feral cats are “fake as implants”. Rapunzel and Bumpkins. The incremental refrain of “The Girls Who Work at the Make-up Counter”. A fearlessness evokes drowning, off limits, and the forbidden. The icy river and “each day a chink”. The family jewel involves theft, private parts, and regrets. The Queen “of all under things”, whose clothing was flung down the stairs, becomes “Our unholy phantom, lady love.” (“Bernadette”) The four seasons are reduced to angels.

Portrait galleries resemble “creatures trapped in an aquarium.” (“In the Halls of my Fathers”) His Germanic gloom pervades. A Viking ship buried. A calligraphy of loss. “one by one, none by none”. Among the Capuchins, she seeks “null eternity and welcomes it.” (“Negative Theology”) A two-star hotel “scrawls futuristic manifestoes” among the graffiti. Only a trace remains of the “Former Summer Palace”. A drowned village results in being unable to “to tell whose swamped yard / had been whose.” (“Ghost Lake”) “FUCK sprayed in red aerosol” amid “a kind of Zen perfection”. This setting reminds the poet of her failed marriage, “and [they] learned nothing”. Athens is “like a taut sail”. An abandoned village “It’s the end of the season”. (“Mirror Lake”) reminds her of “the run-off of centuries”. Urban renewal includes demolishing a church, “like a painting by an old Master”, while a post-war bungalow remains. (“Tantum Ergo”) The vehicles (trucks or cars) become emblems or totems. Her “snake-handling Baptist forefathers” accompanies “my Arizonian twitches”. (“The Answers”)



Born in Montreal, Kerry-Lee Powell has lived in Australia, Antigua, and The United Kingdom, where she studied Medieval and Renaissance literature at Cardiff University and directed a literature promotion agency. Her work has appeared in journals and anthologies throughout the United Kingdom and North America, including *The Spectator*, *The Boston Review*, and *The Virago Writing Women* series. In 2013, she won *The Boston Review* fiction contest, *The Malahat Review*’s Far Horizons

Award for short fiction, and the Alfred G. Bailey manuscript prize. A chapbook entitled “The Wreckage” has recently been published in England by Grey Suit Editions. A novel and short fiction collection are forthcoming from HarperCollins. *Inheritance* is her first book.

Review of *The L.M. Montgomery Reader*, edited by Benjamin Lefebvre (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013) volume One: *A Life in Print*, 450 pp. cloth, Sources, Bibliography, Indexed.

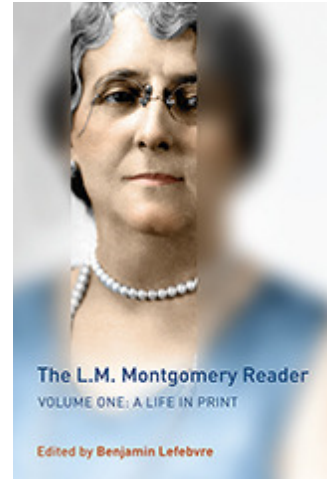
In a letter to her correspondent Ephraim Webber, Montgomery claimed that “Lucy Gray” had been the name of one of her imaginary childhood friends and that the invention had predated her reading of Wordsworth’s poem “Lucy Gray, or Solitude”.

A casual reader of Montgomery’s work may be unaware that she wrote poetry. In “L.M. Montgomery’s Last Poem”, we learn that a tribute appeared in the same issue of *Saturday Night*, May 1942, as well as her final poem, “The Piper”. She had submitted this to the magazine only three weeks before her death. She included the introductory paragraph and the poem in her final book-length manuscript, *The Blythes Are Quoted*. The author of the magazine tribute looked to “The Old Home Calls”, her first published poem in *The Youth’s Companion*, in 1909, and included in *The Watchman and Other Poems*, as evidence of the “spirit of her work”.

Montgomery revealed that she had mentioned a poem, in *Rilla of Ingleside*, which was supposed to have been written and published by Walter Blythe before his death in the Great War. “Although the poem had no real existence hundreds of people have written me asking me where they could get it. It has been written but recently, but seems to me even more appropriate now than then.”

Dr. Lefebvre is director of L.M. Montgomery Online. He produced an edition of Montgomery’s final book, *The Blythes Are Quoted* (Toronto: Viking Press, 2009). The editor was a graduate student, who produced academic essays in journals, such as *English Studies in Canada*, *Essays on Canadian Writing*, and as a contributor and co-editor with Irene Gammel, in *Anne’s World: A New Century of Anne of Green Gables* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010).

I recommend “An Autobiographical Sketch”, by Montgomery, in 1929. When attacked, she could stand up for herself. She responded to letters, in newspapers, about her career. She published two articles in *Chatelaine*, the first on “The ’Teen Girl”, 1931. “Do you find it hard to understand your daughter? Does she shut you out of her confidence? Do you feel she is ‘boy-crazy’ – thoughtless – selfish?” The author was credited with “a conservative form of feminism”, given the desire of “normal girls” for marriage, home, and motherhood. Her “Open Letter from a Minister’s Wife” was published in 1931, along with Nellie McClung’s “What Does the Congregation Expect of a Minister’s Wife?” McClung opined she does her best service “by keeping her man fit and happy, thinking well of himself and highly of his calling.” Was her life cursed? According to Montgomery “I have not the years ahead when things may be better – there is no tomorrow for which I can endure today.”



Did Montgomery write for adults or for children? She was familiarly known as “Minister’s Wife and Authoress”. Some had made a “Mr.” of her in print or relegated her simply to “the wife of Rev. Ewan Macdonald, Norval, Ontario.” Of her wedding banquet, she “felt so miserable...that she had to repress the urge to rip the ring off her finger.” (cited p. 101, from Montgomery, 28 January, 1912). Was Montgomery, a reluctant minister’s wife, but an internationally celebrated author, a feminist after all? In publicly espousing a woman’s place is in the home, on the issue of suffrage, she was ambivalent; felt she was disadvantaged because of her sex, due to a double standard. An intelligent woman should be able to vote. She wrote to earn a living.

Montgomery wrote a column at the *Halifax Daily Echo*. She met a young, girlish reporter who proved to be expert. Was Christian Richardson, the “lady journalist and ardent suffragette”, who interviewed Montgomery? (mentioned in a 1911 letter)? Of her journals, she worked off her rebellious tendencies in these “grumble” books. When her husband developed religious melancholia, “I talked brightly and amusingly – and watched Ewan out of the corner of my eye, wondering how he felt.” (Montgomery, 24 August, 1919). In “Thinks Modern Flapper Will Be Strict Mother” (1924) she noted, “The girl of today is doing what her mother wanted to do!” when asked about smoking. Much was made of her working career at home. “No feminist, as many know the words...but a woman, and a wife and a mother [with a] sane and happy outlook on the vastness of life.”

The editor annotated each of the contributions, with compelling remarks and extended references. For example, Mark Twain commended her character “Anne” as delightful and moving as “Alice in Wonderland”. Bliss Carman commended “Anne” as one of the immortal children of fiction. An early newspaper publisher “could not detect” that the author was a woman. She nearly “bewildered” herself with the writing process. She was indebted to earlier “Ann” characters. She published fourteen stories in *The Canadian Courier*. Her apprentice work included several hundred poems and short stories in Canadian and American periodicals from 1890 onwards. Her four nature essays appeared in *The Canadian Magazine*, which, by 1911, had published eleven stories and as many of her poems. She relied on descriptions in these essays for some of her fiction.

Her five-year engagement resulted in marriage to Ewan Macdonald, in 1911. She was on a book tour at that time and was part of a “burlesque” series of celebrity interviews. She appeared “overdressed” in at least one of her promotional photographs. Her first attempt at public speaking, she gave a speech at the Women’s Canadian Club and local Women’s Press Club in Toronto, in 1913. Her birth date was mistaken. Both facts and details change from telling and retelling. She was between writing projects during the First World War and unsuccessfully insisted against the title *Anne of the Island*. Her second son died at birth in 1914.

Montgomery was the only one to name a text by a woman *Jane Eyre* for a poll on English Literature and not a single text by a Canadian author was selected. There was an article on “Women and Their Work” in *Macleans*, based on an interview, in 1919. She sold all

remaining rights to her first seven books to L.C. Page, in 1919. The resulting lawsuit would not be settled until 1928. A teacher submitted her student's letter and Montgomery's reply to an unidentified journal. In a clipping, she claimed males were the sterner sex, but in recent years "feminine names on publishers' lists have been growing in number, to the extent that women represent the larger number of successful novelists in Canada." Her father decried her blank verse, as "very blank". She was an only child.

As a surrogate mother of sorts, the publication of her first poem was "the proudest moment of my life." This, despite the fact, her first-born was "snipped off" by her editor. She acknowledged the limits of her vision about racial, ethnic, and linguistic matters. She drew anecdotes from her fan mail. As she embraced romance as more popular and appealing than realism, she seems self-conscious in sharing her writing process. She endorsed Canadian authors, such as Frederick Philip Grove and his novel *Over Prairie Trails*, as "clean" not "sex" writing. She appeared as old-fashioned, "I was not at all the sort of modern young woman that the item [in the Charlottetown *Guardian*] implied." Her work was compared with the "maiden" work of Marshall Saunders' *Beautiful Joe* for "simplicity and spontaneity". More than one pamphlet lifted quotes without permission. Was Lewis Page "a vindictive villain" or were publisher and author "evenly matched"? There were seventy-seven female students and ninety-nine male students at teacher's college, when she enrolled, earning a first-class certificate. Her *Anne of Green Gables* was a "communal" novel.

Montgomery was less than pleased with her biographical essays included in *Courageous Women* or "Famous Girls" (McClelland and Stewart, 1934), although she needed the income and derived no profit from a second film adaptation. While attending a preview, her husband suffered "a spell". Neither film was made with her involvement or permission. She wrote a tepid introduction to *Up Came the Moon*, in 1936 and used a diary to evoke memories of rural life, in order to capture the essence of P.E.I.. An interview was published in a Finnish magazine, now translated. Montgomery was active in the Canadian Authors' Association, as an Honourary Member, and she felt qualms about insincere reviews. She was an O.B.E. recipient, in 1935. Her novel *Anne of Ingleside* was the last to be published during her lifetime. She disinherited her eldest son, who lived in her basement. Did he initially refuse to attend her funeral? Her husband was confused about *who* had died. Was his name "Ewan" or "Ewen"? She died, suddenly, in her home, in 1942, with no cause of death made public. She was sixty-seven. Eulogies and obituaries praises her other "arts", since she was an accomplished needlewoman and cook, known for her hospitality. Her readers were bridging adolescence with maturity, in need of "pure" reading. Ephraim Weber (1870-1956) her correspondent wrote two tributes. She had written a last note to him with the aid of a "hypo". Katherine Hale praised Anne as "charming". Montgomery was "one literary lady, as certain critics designate us." Those of the race of Joseph "do" know they are members. (from "On Being of the Tribe of Joseph", by Austin Bothwell, 1927). She advised young people, "And then youth finds out, as we older folks have all found out, that all any generation can do is just to add a little to what has been done before...."

In “Introduction: A Life in Print, Benjamin Lefebvre acknowledges the disparagement of Montgomery by certain male critics, “all of whom tended to sideline popular and female authors in their quest to construct a canon of high modernism for Canadian literature and literary criticism, until the relatively recent reconsideration and general availability by and for scholars. The collection culls additional materials from trade books, newspapers, and popular magazines. There were ninety-one pieces altogether, with eighty selected in Volume One *A Life in Print*, of essays and letters, with interviews; profiles of the author, in addition to early responses to her work. Some of the sources were her journals, letters, and scrapbooks, coupled with periodicals, microfilm, and online databases. See: <http://Immonline.org>.

The Reader comprises three volumes in all, some pieces printed here for the first time. Two fronts of research, namely from archival repositories and due to the digitization of print materials, have yielded many otherwise “lost” items. Volume Two, *A Critical Heritage*, contains twenty items pertaining to posthumous milestones. Volume Three *A Legacy in Review* contains book reviews from newspapers, magazines, and journals.

An “Epilogue Anne of Green Gables The Story of the *Photoplay*” (1920), by Arabella Boone, first appeared in *Photoplay Magazine*, a precursor of posthumous volumes, stage and screen adaptations, parodies, abridgements, and other extensions of her brand. A prequel was published in 2008 and these new texts will be discussed in the remaining two volumes of *The Reader*.

HER
RED HAIR
RISES
WITH THE
WINGS OF
INSECTS
CATHERINE
GRAHAM

Review of *Her Red Hair Rises With The Wings Of Insects, Poems*, by Catherine Graham (Toronto: Wolsak and Wynn, 2013) 59 pp. paper.

The poet met with P.K. Page in 2006 and recounts how Page and Dorothy Malloy became her spiritual mentors in this quest to compose true glosas. This early Renaissance form was developed during the fourteenth century. The opening four lines of another poet’s work (the “cabeza”) are woven into the last line of each of four ten-line stanzas. She began with *Gethsemane Day*, by Malloy, at which point she attempted to write a glosa using a cabeza from each of her poems. Then she referred to Malloy’s *Hare Soup*. The borrowed or appropriated words are consciously set off in italics.

The present collection is carefully documented to reveal the scaffolding. Her dead-drunk father’s face is reflected in the windshield, in an address to the animal, in the dark, which collided with him on the highway. A dead mother’s face arises with red hair. “Poor little orphans. We aren’t orphans”. Nevertheless, the mother appears incapable of showing affection. A fish becomes “Torpedo gold” and freed from aquarium. The poet “hinges” their worlds. A poet needs his audience. “My home is his skin”. Shadows shift like trees, sheep not clouds or snow. August rain and the aftermath. “Mushroom mouth”. “the swan-tilt / of my wrist”. His next attack requires a tourniquet. The physical body resembles an

island, “enter me”. Love is composed of entrails; naming gives the poet power, “No more brick of you”, flowers have deeper meanings. Rain “nails down” and is brittle-inducing. “He sees what I think.” A feral scene of rabbit, in-ground nest bloodied. The fates zigzag. “Mean fists”. “Spirograph”. Bullying (Mrs. Easy’s atlas). Small animal teeth. Vegetable land. (“Peas and Barbies”) The Nativity Scene. “Show’s over”. Helter-skelter. A moan, “So small, they all refused to believe it.” (“Jelly-Bean”) Black weeds (and not pink fields). The female body, spring flowers and fragile plants (mother earth). (“Petals”)

The Queen and Bobby Orr invade her bedroom, while the Avenger waits. “I’m dust”. (“Asylum Wall”) Philomena McGillicuddy, appropriated. A Greek chorus. Victorian bell-systems were implemented to rescue the near-dead (an oven for cremation). The snow is “the white shoots up”, “each flake, each crystal imprint”, “of pedigree lace”. (“Snowfall”) The red answer buried in a child’s letters. (“Volume”) A blank oval (“Torpor”) No god, but poppies, and fairies. Her bedsores and his old body, “grey of an elephant’s”. A lost country, a boy asleep.

The red space was surgically removed from her breast, such that “Black pools will flatten to white.” (“The Fix”) Winter reddens her cheeks. “His glare reopens her scars”. There is red in a net taken down. (“Pail and Shovel”) The mausoleum awaits the Kingdom. The Peace Bridge in “Quarry”, a concrete or pattern poem. Blue, green, brown, earth tones. “Blue can be so wicked”. (“Where Blue Lives”) The body ages, dissolving itself. (“My Skin Is My Grave”) The scar of a pit. (“Limestone”) She sleeps, as tears flow. (“There Is A Stir, Always”)

Graham has also published the trilogy *Winterkill*, *The Red Element*, *Pupa*, in addition to *The Watch*. She teaches creative writing at University of Toronto’s School of Continuing Studies.

Review of *Once a murderer*, by Zoe Landale (Toronto: Wolsak and Wynn,) 95 pp. paper

The first section “Touch” domestic relations are strained, while temptations abound. She was Sleeping Beauty and he was R.C.M.P. Research becomes a “*well-behaved as a police dog at obedience trials.*” The poems are arranged as texts may be in a script, with characters briefly delineated, establishing setting succinctly, and internal monologues italicized. “police never give / information, only take”. (“Portrait Of An Investigator”) She scribbles in a diner, “She thought of him invoking wife”. (“Falcon & Moon”) Her feminine glances and *sustained guile* motivate her keeping a secret, “they’re not lovers and won’t be”. (“Big Sky Of Life”) Story is defined as “a fictitious tale”. The police pilot eyes marijuana, nirvana in motion. His second wife proves “he’d need multiples”. Life is “that helicopter lurch”. An epigraph from Anne Carson on the meaning of touch “as crisis” prequels “Men in the Off Hours”, where Carson’s terms are in bold. The language extols “to serve and protect”, “Authorized Personnel Only”, etc. then repeatedly undercuts the layers of official procedures, with “Once A Murderer”, “The Hug”, “Eye Contact”, “Light On



Moving Water”, “Today She Is Invisible”, “Sleeping Beauty”, and finally “Steelhead Fishing”. Touch may be modified, physical, oral, emotional, fixed, modified, imaginary, difficult, violating, which we face daily and even “a closed category”, due to not transgressing a boundary.

The second section “Body Language” sums up brain-based learning research, left-hand justified narrative arranged in juxtaposition to right-hand justified commentary. For example, in “Flowers and Bones”, the opening statement “What can she sing but poppies” presents a rhetorical structure which defines and then describes the fine details, as in the complementary “their red sheen, the way life /doesn’t hurt so much when / she tends them”. The eye returns to the next declarative statement, “blood colour in drifts”, which eventually shifts to “glided under her radar”. In “After The Hearing: Crime Scene Photos” uses a similar organization, with an epigraph from novelist Graham Greene, “Leave death to the professionals”. On the left, “The body reclines”, and on the right, the conversational exchange between the R.C.M.P. officer and poet/the woman who watches both move forward the narrative. The official language of the pathologist’s report gives way to the olfactory of “snow smell on the wind”. The American television program “Law & Order” defines the difference among “Man (slaughter) 1, Man(slaughter) 2, and Murder. Therefore, the poem is arranged in parallel sections, headed by “Man1” and “Man 2”. The police officer is male and the husband of a female who “waits for him to come back from solving murders”. Their roles are stereotypical, like the stories television tells, consumed by the masses for entertainment. In “Confession”, the stage is set, for every good police narrative, with a man and his wife. Body language must be read because words have been expunged.

In the third section “Crime & Poetry” both terms are sequentially defined and described throughout, using the documentary and found poems, with multiple lists, in note-form. The comparisons are effective and effusive, as “poetry is the swing of a crane”, “sunlight”, a 30-lb salmon”, “a temple roof”, “light standing out in the rain”, “a recessed light”, “a crime scene”, “effervescence boiling”, “a minefield”, “a smooth rock”, “a huge bag of fireworks”, “a secret”, “a red rose” (Gertrude Stein). Crime is “burying the rose”, arming the secret”, “a willful refusal”, “the same rock”, “not watching”, “willfully pitching”, “smeared with body fluids”, “shooting out the light”, “stabs you with the word”, “giving silencers”, “a peeping Tom”, “tossing in a lit phrase”, “a mouth”, and, on a dark January bridge, urges ‘Jump’”.

Landale is a member of the Writers Union of Canada and the Federation of BC Writers. She won first prize for poetry in the CBC Literary Competition and teaches writing.