

CPR

*Resuscitating the art
of Canadian poetry*

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photo: Antonio D'Alfonso



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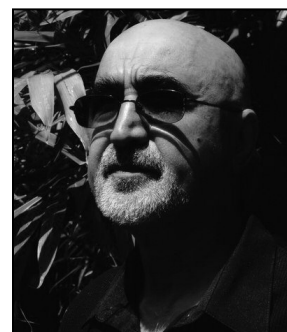
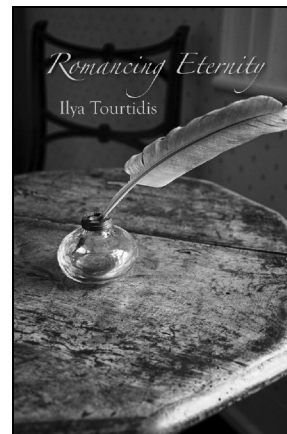
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from Romancing Eternity

Ilya Tourtidis

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Poetry
88 Pages
6 x 9
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Behind The Barricades

Down there
behind the barricades
where spring waits for our consent,
and where the self is kindled
into flesh, joints, and bones,
flames the longing
that separates forever.

Its veinless body shivering
through shades of meaning
like a tiny heartbeat
trying hard not to stumble
back into the void.

And all we can do is watch
and slide down the glints and angles
of our pens, and loose ourselves
beneath our tongues.

Yet even there
in all those thaws and reflections,
in all that disorder staring back at us
against the forming of light,
this longing flares like stolen fire.

Even there it herds the fallen *now*,
very much persuaded that the eye
which covered it with glances
and roused it into existence,
was more than just grammar
or the blind force of opposites
still scratching about
in the abyss.

Romancing Eternity

The spectacle goes on and on
turning the daily ceremony of being
into imitation.

It is there you bloom
like a stemless flower
enthroned among your thoughts.

There you lick the grail off your lips
and romance eternity with ink stained hands,
trying to free yourself from the harness
of dark sonnets you wear as a disguise.

There is no enchantment
that can ease the weight you bear.
No light that can shine back
through the discourse
in which you are wedged.
No way to retrace your steps
back into the fray where all things
are made new without dying.

So you continue to kneel
wasted beyond grief,
wondering by whose permission
you are contained,
even as the silence
piles high upon you.

Morning

The morning light
pulls us out of the undertow
of the night before.

We lie in our cots like weary mariners
embalmed by the sound of the ocean
and the ever-active fullness of the wind.
Somewhere at the back of our throats
is the prayer we will make,
and the echo of a voice
tailored by the waves.

Then we rise,
face our mirrors and light up a smoke,
and frown hard at the outsider
staring back at us.
We puff at the thought
that no matter the distortion,
we are things outside
the images we observe.
And as the great sorrow of this truth
presses hard from all sides,
we realize that nothing is self-evident,
that all those loose ends
which threw us into confusion,
were truths God entrusted
to the deep.

But it is the longing behind our words
we cling to now, the not-yet-existence
trying to slip out of its coils
as we rush eagerly towards it.

None of us know why exactly,
but on a clear day,
when we look towards the horizon,
we can see fallen versions of ourselves
still labouring on towards glistening meadows
and fields.

And that seems to be enough for us,
knowing that we were never really slaves.
And though we somehow lost our winged shoes
loitering for far too long in places
where life fades inside out,
the revealing darkness
will continue to sustain us.

Ilya Tourtidis

was born in Greece in 1949. He emigrated to Australia when he was four years old and to Canada when he was fifteen. He was co-winner of the Gerald Lampert Award in 1994 for his first book of poems *Mad Magellan's Tale* (Sono Nis Press, 1993). A subsequent collection of his poetry, *The Spell of Memory* was published by Oolichan Books (2004). This was followed by two further books, *Path of Descent and Devotion* (Libros Libertad, 2009) and *Bright Bardo* (Libros Libertad, 2011).

The Divine Hue

Perhaps we made it.
Perhaps we did manage
to blunder our way through after all.
Perhaps all that disorder we floundered in
was the only experience that could mend our fall.

We now know
that all things have a divine hue
meant to remind us
not to thrash about in all that ink,
or sit in our orchards and groves
as if nothing had happened.

There is no singularity in being.
That is absolutely clear now.

We are a chorus,
pressing ourselves against yearnings
so entwined with eternity
they howl into a shapeless urge.

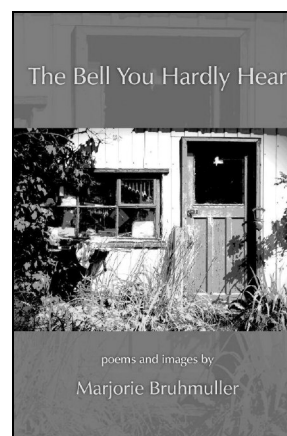
Still,
there are moments
within the moments we observe,
cascading back at us in awe and wonder,
repeating what we already know:

That once and long ago,
in that dream
that was not a dream,
word and matter mingled
and fell upon us like a veil.

from The Bell You Hardly Hear

Marjorie Bruhmuller

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Cow Bells

We drive through the shade
of elms and maples

along mangy crops of rock
and brush, the windows

rolled down to a warm evening,
light linking golden cobwebs

on ripening soy beans. Over the hill
cows graze in an open field

and soon we hear the soft clanging
of the brass bells around their necks,

a sound so ancient, a time-capsule
of the quintessential—how to find one

animal, lost from the herd in the river-valley
after a long day of haying,

with the threat of coyotes, escape
through the fence, or injury.

No computer chip or GPS,
just a gentle far off tinkling, a slow-motion

detector, cow-activated,
transmitted by the wind across the land.

Flash Storm

The storm circles around the lake
and I take shelter under an old birch

protecting my copy of Blake's, *The Book of Thel*,
in the pocket of a borrowed raincoat,

wind thrashes every leaf and rain pounds down,
thunder rolls against the pinnacle, echoing

and grumbling away into the distance, and then,
as if Thor had forgotten to switch off the lightning,

the sky lake trees mountains
even the air—blazes so brilliantly, so golden,

it seems to me, looking out from a dripping hood,
that Apollo, riding wildly across the sky

in his four-horse drawn chariot, is reaching
down through the heavy blackened cumulus, to us,

to save humanity from our self-inflicted apocalypse.
But once home, my husband, watching from the cozy

cottage window, is convinced it was just
a break in the clouds.

Homeland Security

Minnows, slim submarines,
hover over the sand in front of me.
What are they thinking as they inch
toward my pale feet, the engine fins
beating gracefully, like a geisha's fan,
a ballast, allowing sudden dashes
or a muted treading of water?

Gold-flecked rims fixed, not on my
worm-like toes, but through refracted light,
straight to my eyes, as if to judge
my character; these water-guardians,
in matching green uniforms, who
investigate all intruders
from their underwater headquarters.

Variations

I dream
my house
is a violin,
strung high
to the North,

that a triumphant
symphony
of weather
will sweep
its salubrious bow
across the strings—

and while we tune,
my friends will take their
places in upholstered seats,
open programs,
shift in anticipation.

I stand by the stairs
in the belly of this instrument
to conduct the spheres, patiently
tapping my baton, awaiting
the attention of the orchestra,
and the blustery soloist
who has come to play.

*After 13 years of
owning and man-
aging her own
natural soap
business*

**Marjorie
Bruhmuller** took
on writing poet-
ry. Her poems
have appeared in
over fifty reviews
and journals in
Canada, the US and Britain. She enjoys life in the
Eastern Townships of Quebec, Canada, even in
winter. You'll find her poetry at Tupelo, Orion
online, Carte Blanche, Waterstone Review, The
Antigonish Review, Room, Event, One Hundred
Gourds and Wordless, Haiku Canada 40 years of
Haiku.

A Well-Trained Poem

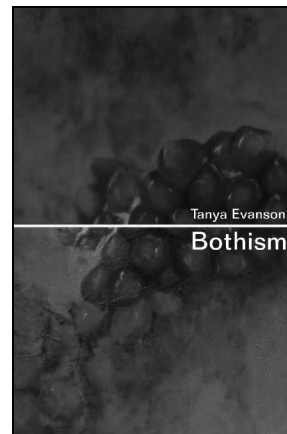
Before lunch
I will walk my poem
down the road, let it sniff
at the base of trees, call after it
as it starts in chase of some
small creature, following
its instinct to go off the path
check the woods, shadow
between the trunks.

Indignant, my poem
lifts its leg on invisible borders,
growls at whiffs on the wind
barks at freshly dug holes, rolls
in cow patties and dust, smiling.
And, sitting on the steps back home,
it licks its lips, beats its tail,
quivering for a pat on the head,
another throw of the ball.

from Bothism

Tanya Evanson

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Tanya Evanson
Bothism

Moving and Not Moving

This condition is an exit without exit. An aid to the most beautiful no. The reverence of abandonment. The truth and its opposite. The whole earth carried forward by the upward shitting of worms. All raw materials returned to their sources immediately thank you. A lack of co-surrender. The single cell divided. Equilibrium swung. Disillusionment departed. A calm chaos over all. Peace inside the heart attack. Cars moving and not moving. Actions undone. Backward speech. Eclipse. Anechoic chambers. No words to equal the silence between us and the no-such-thing-as-silence comes and the poem is writ. There's always a surge towards the end right before you know you're going to die. You increase activity because you know it will be your last. Cooking, cleaning, drinking, soiling yourself, vomiting all over the house. These are the knowing hours. Deepest sorrow. A coming into silence. A sad on arrival. A love story and simultaneous wake for it. We move towards destruction. Road leads the way to itself.

Finishing Salt

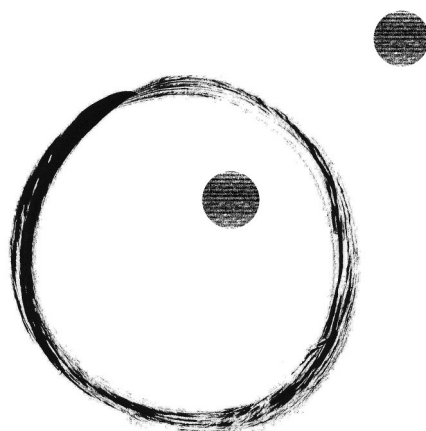
This is our end of season in the food forest. Bitter apple. Fairytale fungus. Spores so dry they fly and impregnate everything nearby but us. These are the pivotal places. Leaves drop loud. Everything burns. Autumn sugars in on itself. Concentrated sun. Jam on trees. A deep Gulf Island cum. Spring is scented for courtship. Summers want wet. Winters lie in wait, yearning. We make deep criminal love from far away. Inside. The Cabin. The Heart. Soft. Because we know this will be our last flame gone out as if we were not Lovers recovered as fire to smoke into air breath into body absorbed into blood energy of muscles pushed to exhaustion as if we had not just begun inside Nature. These are the cutting times. The fear of amputation. Fall. The slow wood fire. Galiano Island never ends. Even ash holds evidence in wind of our first Aegean meeting. Fresh tomato, olive oil, broken bread and Turkish tea beneath the Bozcaada sycamore. These are small cremations now. Slow. With intent. A forced dying. You approach from the east and I the west. We walk the path raw. Our very own Silk Road toward separation.

O Vancouver

I'm so glad we fell in love
Once by accident, twice by choice
You were always beside yourself with emotion
Never apologize for your outbursts!
You cry and cry for some mysterious reason
But when you find a moment's peace
The clouds move and we gasp
Taking it all in until the next downpour
In truth, your beauty is too intoxicating
Mere humans cannot stand it for too long
The provocations of snow tip, crisp salt waves
Frosted light, yearlong green and petalled streets
You veil your face to protect us
So we don't take your beauty for granted
First by accident, then by choice
This is how you control the flow of lovers
To your shore

Crescent

A dervish carries robes for a long time
It is the practice for carrying people
Until dervish lets go of robes
And carries only people
A most beautiful nothingness comes
Like sadhus who coat themselves in death
Then wave smiling with a brother's ashes
Coating the brown skin
We too can be stick-carrying reminders of the
horn
Strong haired, full bushed
Long legged and fired up
Living on air, mangos and burning dung
Sky clad, unquenchable, a raised fist for years
Not all people can fight such gravity
The forehead increasing now like never before
Relax, somewhere the sun says, "I will fold you"
You will bend before me and like it



Tanya Evanson
is an Antiguan-Canadian writer and performer from Tio'tia:ke / Montreal. She is a graduate of Concordia University Creative Writing and program director of Banff

Centre Spoken Word. Evanson has released four audio recordings including ZENSHIP (2016) and recent spoken word performances include Suoni per il Popolo, Ubud Writers and Readers Festival, Tasmanian Poetry Festival, Edinburgh Book Festival and Glastonbury Festival. Her second book of poetry Nouveau Griot is available from Frontenac House and recent publications include WSQ, 40 Years of Room Magazine, Resist Much / Obey Little and Where the Nights Are Twice as Long. Evanson is a past recipient of the Golden Beret Award and was Poet of Honour at the 2013 Canadian Festival of Spoken Word. She moonlights as a whirling dervish.



Two Moons One Sun

Once upon a time there were two moons and one sun under the Blue Dome. One day, one moon chased the large sun away, as if the sun were some kind of bully. Chased him right out of the sky! And now the night never ends so the moons make love all night long to give us Light. One thousand years later the sun reappeared all wise and bronzed and strong. One moon saw this and a sharp fire rose. One moved towards One and they never parted again. Now there is One and there isn't One. Imagine Love at first sight twice in one lifetime! This was all too much for the moons. One moon exploded while the Other became a large black hole. The sun however, kept on giving its Light looking for One to reflect it.

from Daring Touch

Louise Cotnoir

translated by Antonio D'Alfonso

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Woman, keep the darkness in mind

Woman, keep the darkness in mind.
Entrenchment on your forehead smashed. I say
darkness, the perspective of what is blows out, of
what none can no longer hurt. Bewildered, crazy.
Each strolling with their lives on the glossy covers
of magazines, the world has the stench of a
urinal. Sight has no bearing anymore, breaking
against the pink-tinted glasses. There are days
when Death knocks against it.

There is a woman in a storm, gathering the bits
and pieces. Undaunted as she unveils the horror.
Water seeps into the bending ferns. Sunday.
Passion at hand. The woman bends and models
the roundness of her cheek on the mist-covered
windowpane where every person of the city
appears. Marine landscape. She touches without
touching, uncertain the distance between herself
and the wolves. The sway of slumber. It's almost
autumn.

Not to recognize anything anymore. Dirty wet
bed sheets. So strange that she does not remem-
ber where she comes from. She steps out, camera
in hand, looking for footsteps on which she can
put her feet. She is walking through every garden,
every café all the way to the beach. She pauses
there, feet throbbing, numb in the waves. The
taste of water pulls her underwater. On the pho-
tograph, that is all we see. Water, in which she
recognizes herself.

Like the *Welwitschia Mirabilis* I dive into the
heat, the fire of sand. Are there phreatic waters in
this desert hell? With wetness and the softness of
the beach, I fashion the body of women. On my
hands the incurable, unsteady, and fleeting fla-
vors of obsession. I stand up against Death and
spread out like an omen. Muddy, black, desire
deep in my mouth, the purvey the future so that
it will not fall in ruins. Mesmerized by nature as
an apparition, I stagger forward, turn my head
back to heed the steps taken.

Impossible for me to act differently. I transform
and distort. I invent names and stories for the
faces I see on the bus. I lie to myself so as to not
miss a thing. Good times, bad times, I stare at the
passengers with intensity. I memorize a handful
of sentences overheard so that they can serve me
in dialogues and echoes. The bus ticket in
between my teeth, I often wreck the dark.

Nothing surprises me anymore.

On the most travelled zone of the road, I've no
sense of disaster. Which boosts the undecipher-
able. Take new steps forward, double my bet.
Systemically I trip over accidents. No kidding.
Between my thighs with white striation stock-
ings, and behind my eyes I see the deafening
froth of fear.

Awesome effects, seduction. Real sensations.
Listen: fingers cracking. Women are weeping, but
leave no trace of it. A kind of varnish on the
scene. Shells in membranes, quadraphonic explo-
sions. The allgrounded machinery. Listen: the
screaming when fingernails are torn off. The
caustic features of images. The pause that ham-
pers and stuns your heart. Without the energy to
frame the light coming through the blinds. Just
being there during the summer, lost under the
yellowed plaster molding. There, notice the
nuclear warheads.

At the theatre, perhaps, the appearance of a
female body. Its perfect probity between tooth
and mouth gaping over the excitement of ampli-
fiers. On the face luminosity. A marvel. Defiantly,
the stage is set for a time of unbelievable music:
Fauré's *Requiem*. Maybe we will get it, but that's
not sure. Thus Death looks so much like Death.

I've got no opinion on temporary fascination.
Only on existence. In fact, I deal with the fate
given me. Change of angle, silhouette, degrees for
the invention of other stories. Violently crushing
death's skull against the subway train. I lure hot
charms necessary to finger paint bodies in detail,
that is, identical to me, fixed.

Evening gobbles up light. First, it's the dusty
gray, the soot; then, the black that sticks to the
windshield. The stridency of car horns, the gas
vapor rising in the midst of nowhere, stepping on
it as if to accelerate. There are hours when our
thoughts are unreal, with the unbearable feeling
of being a mass produced thing. Torpor wins
over the feeble anger. Your eyes scare you. Soft,
flexible, the brain reveals its utmost weakness. It
is there that the clear impression of being an
intruder settles in.

She wanders through the streets, searching.
Slipping on Plexiglas which is shattered to pieces.

Louise Cotnoir is the author of more than twenty books. In 1996, Tell Me I'm Imagining This was a finalist for the Governor General's Award. In 2016, she published a collection of poems entitled Vanessa Bell soeur de Virginia Woolf, and, in 2017, Le frère d'Antigone, her first novel.



At times, she wants to wring her tongue until it
gives up its ghost. Not to kill it, but to find its
inspiration. A how-to guide on passion. She reas-
sures the taxi driver in her stupor. She kisses him
in her sleep. A few dollars so that her heart might
spread out in his hand in the middle of her
monthlies. The car dashes off, red light, green
light. Disconnection.

She sometimes loses herself in shop windows.
Desire pinned on mannequins trouble her. To
ape fashion shows or daily chores. To carry the
soldier's gun, revised and corrected. She refuses
the wristwatch; she won't move a step forward.
Something else, her tiffs. She is bleeding for hav-
ing thrust her fist into it all. She scoops a tea-
spoon of the champagne-dipped cream. These
times of obviousness will surely end one day.

Hot draft, shiver up my spine. In the piazza, the
chiming clock scares the birds away. Easter.
Sipping tea and reading voices from abroad
keeps me busy, relaxed. I'm surprised that I do
not recognize myself in the baker's shop window.
Animal with beautiful skin. One eye receives it
all. Astonished for knowing how to smile still.
Sliding a cream puff onto the tray beside a sec-
ond one. She is enjoying the action, its rhythm.
Writing scripts for this naked era.

from Climbing Knocknarea

Lesley Choyce

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Lesley Choyce is the author of over ninety books of literary fiction, short stories, poetry, creative nonfiction and young adult novels. He has won The Dartmouth Book Award, The Atlantic Poetry Prize and The Ann Connor Brimer Award. He has also been shortlisted for the Stephen Leacock Medal, The White Pine Award, The Hackmatack Award, The Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Award and The Governor General's Award.

Poem Written With My Left Hand

I think it was Leonardo da Vinci
who told his students
to try writing
with the non-dominant hand and see what happens.
So I tried writing this poem
with my left hand
and it felt awkward
and frustrating.
Thanks so much, Leonardo.

But I liked the sound
of the title of this poem
so right now I am cheating
and pretending to write
with my left hand.
I was hoping to keep the lie going
right to the end of the poem
wishing to make the reader think
I was somehow brilliant and creative
and following in the footsteps
of the Italian master.

I was going to say I had
some grand epiphany while writing
realizing that the left hand
was maybe the spiritual hand of God
reaching down into my consciousness
here on the Eastern Shore of Nova Scotia—
you know, touching me ever so lightly
on the forehead.
But instead, the clouds did not open
the sun did not even come out
yet I wrote my first poem in weeks
and you know what, Leonardo?
The right hand was impressed
and fully agreed with
what the left hand was thinking.

The Trouble With Everything

The trouble with everything
is that there's just so damn much of it.
Some of us, for example
want to experience everything
there is to experience
but life is too short for that
so
we have to settle
for some things
not everything.
But if we divide everything
into
the good and the bad
we might say
I only want to experience
the good things.

But this would not work
because of many

obvious reasons.
So that leaves us
with having to subdivide
everything
even further
until ultimately
you realize
that what we get to experience
of everything
is so microscopic
that some cynics might say
what's the point?

Perhaps you should just
give up altogether
and say that if you can't
see it all
and do it all
and feel it all
then you might as well
stay home
and do
nothing.

However,
in lieu of missing out
on everything
I've decided to hunker down
and
be here now
(yes, here and now—
sometimes the hardest thing to do)
and wake up to your smile
and touch
and sharing it all
breakfast to sunset
and beyond
in our private, familiar
oh so very remote galaxy
of infinitesimal perfection.

Edible Wild Plants

My first published book (self-published really)
was about edible wild plants
and I sold it from the back of my car at folk festivals
to hippies like me
who wanted to eat cheap
and healthy.

The dandelion and cattail still speak to me
from those pages
and I can still taste
wild berries on the memory of my tongue
and edible seaweed
dried in the woodstove
until the house smelled
like the beach after a hurricane.

Chanterelles were as dangerous as I dared
but worth it

once sautéed with onions.
Labrador tea tasted just great at first
and later more like hot turpentine
on a winter afternoon.

I had a forest and field and a marsh
in those days
instead of a supermarket.
But then I started writing books of poetry
instead of anything so perfectly practical
and
one thing led to the next
until I had to find a job to buy food
which left me no opportunity
to harvest and eat weeds for lunch at work.

Before I knew what was happening
I had a lawn
instead of an unkempt edible pasture
and found myself sitting on a lawnmower
with iced tea and a sun visor.

Things change for all of us
I know.
And now
after a mediocre store-bought dinner
I go out
at dusk to breathe in the dying day
and uproot the offending dandelions
with a tool that looks like an iron maiden.
I throw the limp and lifeless victims
into a heap
by the lake
as I apologize to the setting sun
for the pragmatic modern man I have become.

from On Love

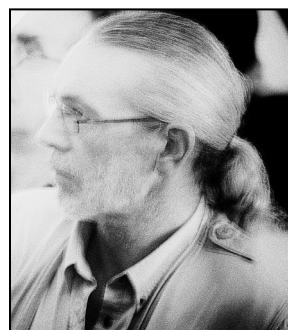
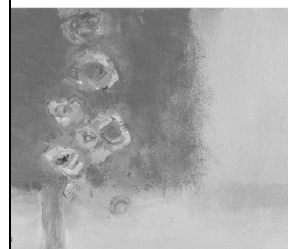
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Jack Keguenne
ON LOVE

Translated by Antonio D'Alfonso



Jack Keguenne is a poet, novelist, essayist and visual artist. A literary and art critic, and the author of more than thirty books, he also worked as a librarian and was an art gallery owner. His artworks have been presented across the world in solo and group exhibits. He lives and works in Bruxelles.

1
Love tags a spiral horizon.

2
In love, the small change of darkness loses all value.

3
When in love, there are no deadlines.
No solutions. Just achievements.

4
In love, a look given, a look shared provokes transformation. Bringing everything down to the silence of an eyelid.
And there, the birth of a tear or a light.

5
We define love as thunder, which gets inscribed on a wrinkle.
(The present is impatient.)

6
I don't need plan to work on love. All that matters is I look, listen, and perhaps touch. I follow its dictation. I effortlessly recognize its spelling and syntax.

7
In love, I don't need to remember my landmarks.
All I need is to consult an uncharted map.

No matter the landscape, there's always this attribute: bracing he who walks through and contemplates it.

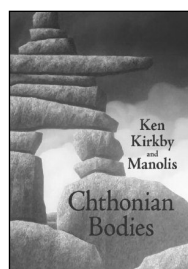
8
You are forever a stranger.
I'm forever a traveler.
Our task is to deal with issues of welcome and hospitality.

9
To which alder is the depth of a look measured? Love prolongs night and shortens daytime. Or is it the opposite? As one wishes. Love knows the precise weight of a word and skin. Love must not be cluttered with promises.

10
My beard keeps growing when I sleep, when I think of you.
Waking to you is a kind of stripping. I wreck the destiny you imagined for yourself without me.
Then, of course, my bristles prick your lips and cheeks.

11
Reduce gentleness to seriousness.
I will not run away from tenderness. Whether I'm standing or asleep, I know I can study your face – imitate your gestures.

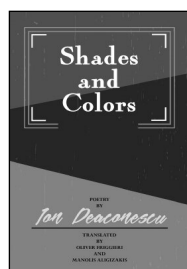
12
What I'm speaking about might not be of interest to you.
No matter the outcome, I'm the master of my hands.
You are free to receive them. And where you wish.
I will always be alone when I weep, even from excess of the beautiful.



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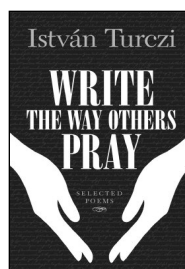
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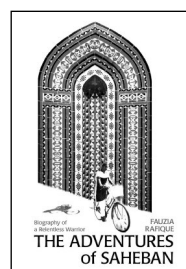
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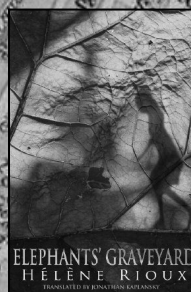
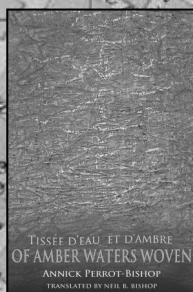
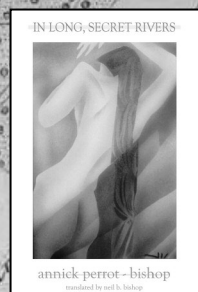
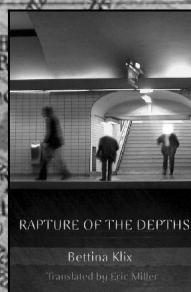
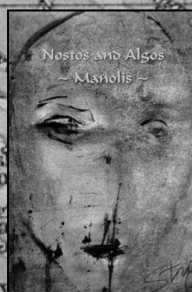
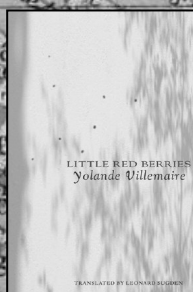
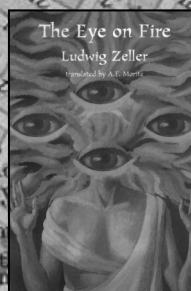
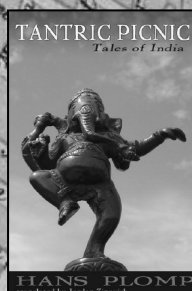
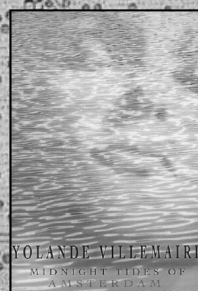
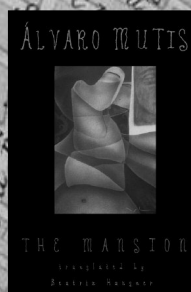
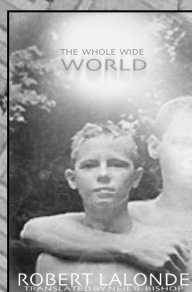
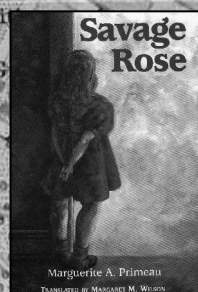
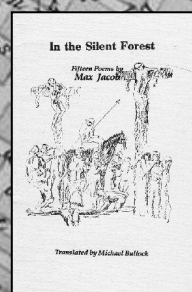
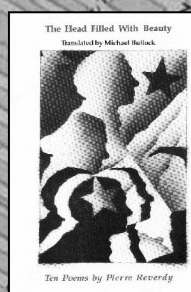
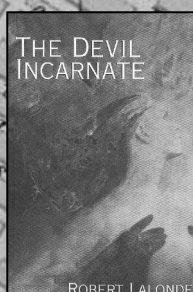
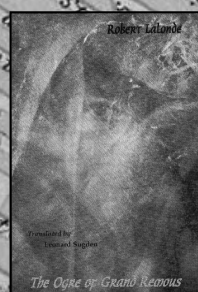
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