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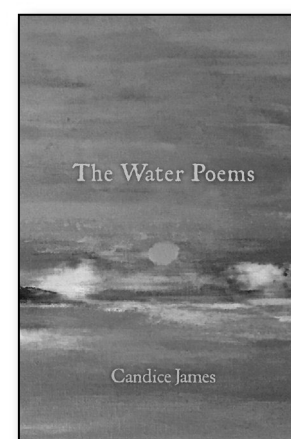
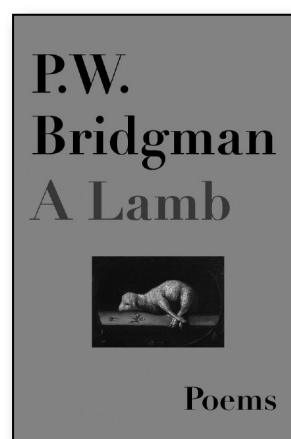
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art: Candice James



Published by CPR: The Canadian Poetry Review Ltd.
Publisher/Editor: Richard Olafson
Managing Editor: Carol Ann Sokoloff
Circulation manager: Bernard Gastel

Legal deposit at the National Library of Canada, 2014.
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The CPR is published four times a year. Back issues are available at \$4.00. A one-year subscription is \$20.00. Please send a cheque payable to the PRRB.

CPR mailing address for all inquiries:
Box 8474 Main Postal Outlet, Victoria, B.C.
Canada V8W 3S1
phone & fax: (250) 385-3378

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from A Lamb

P.W. Bridgman

THREE LAMENTATIONS

We Strive to Dismiss Their Prejudices, Mostly with Good Humour (A Lamentation in 7/4 Time)

“Your eyes are in a heavy case,
your purse in a light: yet you see
how this world goes.”

—*King Lear*, 4.6.142–43

“Eat only acumen,” Irena’s father says over breakfast,
meaning the albumen, “if you like.”
He is worried about his own weight,
so he worries about ours too.
About everyone’s, really.
Irena cringes when he opens his mouth;
even more when her mother opens hers:

“You take Vulva to cinema tonight. Ride, she is very
smooth.”
They are very proud of their new car. In 1989, Václav
Havel
waved at them once from a car much like it, in Hradec
Králové.
“He was look right at our eyes.”

“When I came this country, I am coming
for better life,” her father says.
“Yes, of course,” I answer, sincerely.
“And you found it. You made it.”
I decline the buttered toast and
push the yolks to one side of my plate.
He grunts his approval.

A birth control prescription has pushed Irena’s to one
side, too,
acumen and all, together with any hope of Christian
salvation.
God, or someone, please help us
if ever they find out.

“You are funny boy. Father is doctor. Mother is doctor.”
I interrupt him: “And I am just a house painter.”
“Mendel writes beautiful poems,” Irena interjects,
“and sings in a choir.”
“Poems! Nobody buys poems. Can you eat his poems?”
Her mother joins in: “You want Vulva someday?
You want good life?”

“Stop! Please, just stop,” Irena implores,
her face reddening. It’s bad enough
that I’m not Catholic, but a Jew
without a profession?

“Listen me,” her father says, leaning forward in his chair.
“Listen me.”
“I’m listening.”
“Your God. My God. Is same God...”
I interrupt again: “Mm-hmm. And your Jesus was a
carpenter.”

“Such talk!” her mother cries out.
Everyone stands up.
“And your Havel was a poet,” Irena adds with a wink.

The Things He Grasped with Both Hands (A Lamentation in Thirty-Six Bars)

1. The breast.
2. The “bah-bah.” (The bottle.)
3. The rattle with the smiling clown’s face.
4. The vertical slats of the crib when it got dark.
5. The picture books they gave him.
6. The cinnamon bread she baked him.
7. The Meccano set he bought him.
8. His ears when they argued.
9. The handlebars.
10. The black pony’s mane.
11. The library shelves.
12. The door of the taxi when she left them.
13. The telephone when she called him.
14. His ears when she didn’t.
15. The chance to study at an American university.
16. The Christmas cards she sent him from Rome and Vienna.
17. The sleeves of the graduation suit that didn’t quite fit.
18. The job at the merchant bank that didn’t quite suit.
19. His head when the call came she’d died in Zurich.
20. The telephone when he dropped it.
21. The notice of termination he picked up at reception.
22. His girlfriend’s ears when she wouldn’t listen, again.
23. The hem of her dress when he begged her forgiveness, again.
24. His ears when she wouldn’t give it, again.
25. The telephone she used to call the police.
26. The vertical bars of his cell when it got dark.
27. The sleeves of the prison garb that were a little too long.
28. The door of the taxi when he was released.
29. The job at McDonald’s that he just couldn’t stand.
30. The Nag’s Head doorway when he couldn’t stand up.
31. The helping hand of the cop with the round, smiling face.
32. The Bible.
33. The bottle.
34. The Bible.
35. The Bottle.
36. The Bb-b...ottle.

I Am Only Temporarily a Tie Salesman (A Barbed Lamentation in Sonnet Form)

I am only temporarily a tie salesman.*
If there were a God I’d be driving that Buick.
“You gotta smoke, Lionel? Thanks. I owe you one.”
If I don’t make quota, honey, I’m fucked. This ain’t
Lubbock.

It was so much better when I was in shoes.

Ekstasis Editions
ISBN 978-1-77171-273-6
Poetry
120 Pages
\$23.95
6 x 9
Now Available

P.W.
Bridgman
A Lamb



Poems

P.W. Bridgman writes from Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. He has earned undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in psychology and a degree in law as well. Bridgman’s writing has appeared in anthologies published in Canada, Ireland, England and Scotland, and his first book—a selection of short stories entitled Standing at an Angle to My Age—was published in 2013. You may learn more about P.W. Bridgman by visiting his website at <www.pwbridgman.ca>



Kissed ass to get in there, too. Then couldn’t afford the suits.
Jee-zus! But, honey, there’s no use me singing the blues in my Fort Worth accent, wearing my resoled Chelsea boots.

Busted back to ties and socks, now—how can I upsell and shine?
In these big New York City outfits they look after each other.
“Hey, Bruce... Sorry? Oh! Thanks for asking. The baby’s just fine.”
Patronizing bastard. If the boss weren’t his brother...

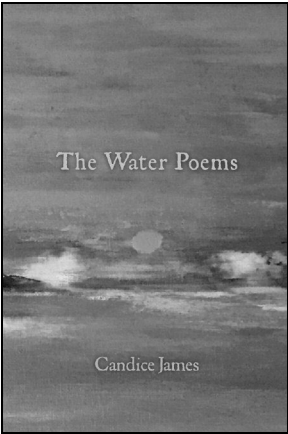
“We call them *neckties* here. Can you do that?” asks Bruce.
“Sure, Buddy,” I say, choosing him a Burberry plaid noose.

* The line is borrowed from Lawrence Ferlinghetti’s poem, “Autobiography,” in *A Coney Island of the Mind* (New York: New Directions, 1958). Copyright © 1958, Lawrence Ferlinghetti. Reproduced with the permission of New Directions Publishing Corp.

from The Water Poems

Candice James

Ekstasis Editions
ISBN 978-1-77171-225-5
Poetry
105 Pages
\$23.95
6 x 9
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*After serving two 3 year terms as Poet Laureate (2010-2016) **Candice James** has been awarded the title of Poet Laureate Emerita of New Westminster, BC Canada, by order of City Council. She is also a visual artist, musician, singer/songwriter, book reviewer and workshop facilitator. She is Founder, Board Advisor and Past President of Royal City Literary Arts Society; Director of Pacific Festival of the Book Society; Past President of the Federation of British Columbia Writers; Past Director of Slam Central and Past Director of SpoCan. She is a full member of the League of Canadian Poets and The Writers Union of Canada. She also is founder of: “The Fred Cogswell Award For Excellence In Poetry”; “Poetry In The Park”; “Poetic Justice” “Poetry New Westminster”; and she has been keynote speaker at “Word On The Street”, “Word on the Beach”; and “Black Dot Roots Cultural Collective.” She is the author of eleven previous books of poetry.*

Black Onyx Lake

Above the lip of a black onyx lake,
I walked as a ghost in a foreign land,
All around me in a state of flux:
Mountains dissolving;
Sand dunes shifting;
Sky cracking open;
Stars in free-fall
Above the lip of a black onyx lake.

I saw stars being born,
Burning out, disappearing;
Angels in flight touching down on the lake.

I saw high-wires, guidelines and cities
Constructed with neon and gauze;
Rainbows changing their colours at will.

In a moment of madness
The sun kissed the moon;
And imagination’s children were born,
Raining down sweet inspiration
Spilling from a crack in the sky
Onto poets, musicians and artists
In reverent and sacred free-fall.

My eyes overflowing
With moon, stars, and sky
And wrapped in the breath of angels,
I stood as a ghost
Turned inside out
Bearing witness to
Both sides of the dark
Below a slow moving heaven
Beneath a surreal sky,
Above the lip of a black onyx lake.

The Drowning

It’s raining all over the world tonight.
I hear voices, indistinct whispers
As I lay at the edge of slumber.
The wind gusts softly in musical timbres.
A pale ghost with fingers of glass
Deftly strums a satin guitar with a tattered velvet pick.
An age old wisdom shines from the clouds in his eyes.
The night is aglow with timeless stars
Twinkling, sparkling, shimmering,
Oblivious to the approaching deluge.

The voices and indistinct whispers
Grow louder, become clearer
Emulating laughter and cries;

Echoing muted murmurs and moans
That ebb and flow through a hollowed out sky.

Angels, Saints and the Holy Ones
Weave their way through the flickering starlight
Ascending to a realm just beyond the drowning.
It’s raining all over the world
And the clinging, egregious damp
Foretells of the drowning... edging ever closer.

The rain has become second nature to me now.

I hear voices and whispers
And watch faces that float in street puddle mirrors:
For a long time; for a short time;
For almost no time at all.

Soon the rain will sink them into the drowning.
It’s raining all over the world
And I wonder....
Who’ll stop the rain?

Ink Stain in the Rain

The cruel wind scrapes and rapes
The soft, supple, satin drapes
In the cave of evening shade.
Under gun metal sky,
Cracked, splintered and dry,
We play our tragic masquerade.

On the mantle of doom
And foreboding gloom
We reach for this feeling we’re chasing.

We can’t quite grasp enough of it,
Just a quicksilver touch of it,
This dream Daughter Time is erasing.

Then, I feel your heart slip,
So I tighten my grip
On the trembling lip of this storm.

Your body’s a river,
A fast running shiver
And I can’t seem to keep

myself warm.
Engulfed by the ocean
And fading emotion,
You let go of my hand.

Tide sweeps you away
But bids my heart stay.
Nothing is as we

planned.
Waves wash me ashore,
Lips parched evermore
Never to taste yours
again.
Love letters and pain,
Left out in the rain,
Became a fading ink stain.
Now, days without sun.
The moon’s come undone
And I... I’ve become the rain.

Flightpaths by Heidi Greco

Review by Bill Arnott

Never in my life have I read a book of poetry in one sitting. Until now. Heidi Greco manages the impossible in *Flightpaths: The Lost Journals of Amelia Earhart*. Greco's unique mix of contemporary verse poetry and Earhart-inspired journal entries in prose combine to create a well written screenplay simply awaiting camera crew and musical instrumentation.

Australian journal Verity La: Heightened Talk implores poets to "Be brave, taking poetry that might not even look like poetry to its conclusion, no matter the potential madness." Which is what Greco has done. Expertly. Without the madness. No need to encourage this writer to be brave. She's already there, her mix of familiar line-break verse generously mixed with prose-like blocks, the result a well-blended visual and sensory hop-scotch.

From Crashed: "Mayday, mayday, SOS. / This is KHAQQ. / Earhart and Noonan here. / Over. / How many times did I make the call, / sending and sending / an echo of myself."

Then from 4th of July, barely an atoll: "This was to be our day of celebration, California our final destination. I console myself thinking instead how folks in Atchison will gather in front of my grandparents' house. They'll sprawl in sweet grass on the riverbank while fireworks fill the summer sky. With the moon waning, the stars here grow in intensity, so tonight they will serve as my private fireworks."

I can't help but keep going, needing to know how it ends, despite knowing all too well. I think. I'm no longer certain. Greco's research is exceedingly thorough. I ended up reading *Flightpaths* on International Women's Day which felt apropos, a role-model authentic and courageous – pilot and author alike.

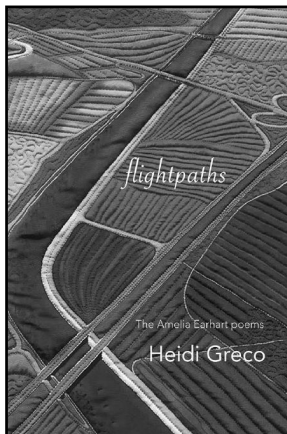
From Step right up, little lady: "tired of how these men / doh-see-doh me round the tarmac / squeezing timid smiles from me / flirting for a kiss"

Like turbulent seas surrounding our heroine we drift with an ebb and flow of emotion, lucidity, survival, imprisonment (real or imagined?) along with grief, hope, resignation and ambiguous clarity.

July 24: "Tonight will be the fullest moon. Also my birthday, a milestone. I'm not sure whether that fellow who wrote the book was right when he said life begins at forty. How old must he be by now? Is his life still full of beginnings? As for me, this will be the day of my ending. One decision I can make alone, one thing I can do for myself. Too long here, too tired to carry on, too sick, too done."

When I finally set down Greco's innovative book I felt, I believe, like stranded Earhart, a sense of completion, open ends alongside conclusion. I was left uniquely satisfied, wanting for more but content with where things have ended, more or less, a starry seaside ellipsis.

Vancouver author, poet, songwriter Bill Arnott is the bestselling nonfiction author of *Dromomania* and *Gone Viking*. His poetry, articles and reviews are published in Canada, the US, UK, Europe and Asia. Bill's series Left Coast Poetry Beat is published by the League of Canadian Poets and the Federation of BC Writers.



Flightpaths: the Lost Journals of Amelia Earhart

Heidi Greco
Caitlin Press
96 pages, \$18.00

Stained with the Colours of Sunday Morning by Rayanne Haines

Review by Candice James

Rayanne Haines takes us on a rough and tumble ride through the sweet and the sorrowful fields and mind diagrams of her carefully sculpted poetic storyscape.

On these pages we hear four voices, but predominantly we are presented with three main voices sharing the functional and dysfunctional sides of familial love, disappointments, and the razor's edge of resilience.

In "Brushstrokes" (Isabella's voice) Her rebellious spirit commands the stage as she states "But I'd rather be a wanderer than waited on / Would rather write of mythic sires than childhood fantasies."

"Spices" in its entirety is one of the most primal and best poems about casual sex that I have ever read; twelve impacting lines in three stanzas that say it all! What is certain is that this poem definitely is 'a must read poem'!

An underlying weave that emerges off and on throughout the book is a recurring resentment and disappointment caused by the many absences of Haines' mother in her life, particularly in her young and formative years. In "not gently to love" (Alina's voice) Hayne's bares deep wounds: "my mother's love / always left me behind" and again in "for a walk that was not mine: "she never thought her child / would wish to remain in Italia / had no interest in a foreign country / she never thought to ask."

"When Spring Came" (Isabella's voice) Here we see the poet's view of what her mother thinks: "my angry daughter unreachable by me // by another winter she / would look at me with love." And the follow up poem to this "In Canada my mother flourished" (Alina's voice): "I could almost love her then / when the three of us / sat with our fingertips entwined // I could almost feel / that she wanted me."

Then the poem "Moon lullabies" (Isabella's voice): "I think I was a better mother / in her dreams. // such a burden for a young soul. / To have to wait for the sun to go down / before she could love her mother."

There are so many terrific lines in this book I simply can't stop quoting them. These lines in "she should have known better" (Alina's voice) are a glowing example of Haines ability to expose the inner reaches of buried sorrow: 'my soul aged like the leather / of my suitcase, worn down / from too many trips breathing / broken air // she should have known better / returned with me / shouldn't have left me / to suffocate in metal birds / to drown on parched ground."

"Advice to My Daughter" (Isabella's voice) offers the following poignantly surreal lines of truth: 'Do not love a man wearing shadows / For he will turn on you / with the angle of the sun."

Again the resentment and disappointment read their heads blatantly in "finding our resilience" (Alina's voice): 'I resented / her some days for daring / to occupy my place // I was afraid to admit / that she knew how to mother /when even then / I accused her of / failing as mine. // resenting the innocence / of your child / and the resilience / of your mother."

The last four poems are in four successive voices remembering Isabella:

(Georgia-her husband's voice): "Without her/ I am thin as the edge of an eggshell / I am empty as a fallow wheat field."

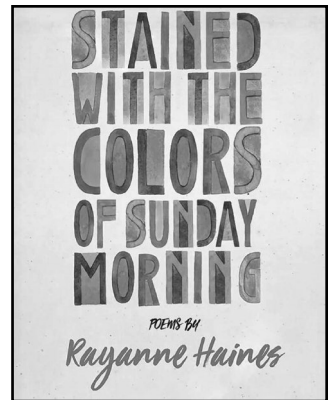
(Georgia – her granddaughter's voice): "maybe it is about living / undone, living unconstrained/ living on the edge of too much. // I read her eulogy. Maybe / we should all learn to live like her."

(Alina – her daughter's voice): "I want it to be winter again / and I am climbing off the plane / overwhelmed and feeling / smaller than an insect // I would rather feel / that than this being / alone on the earth again."

And the fourth and final voice is (Isabella's departed presence): 'How strong is hope in the face / of alone? When alone / is what you are left with. // There is no alone I am not alone.'

Rayanne Haines has written a brilliantly carved out poetic saga that unravels with eloquent ease on the pages within "Stained With the Colours of Sunday Morning". It is definitely one of 2018's best offerings.

Candice James is a poet, musician, visual artist, singer songwriter. She was Poet Laureate of New Westminster, BC for two 3 year terms 2010-2016. and awarded the title of Poet Laureate Emerita in November 2016 by the City. She is the author of thirteen poetry books, the most recent The Water Poems (Ekstasis Editions 2017).



Stained with the Colours of Sunday Morning

Rayanne Haines
Inanna Publications
2018, 96 pages
\$18.95

A Lamb by P.W. Bridgman

Review by Bill Arnott

P.W. Bridgman is not who he appears to be. He belongs in a comic book. Not Marvel but DC, a justice league of one. But unlike his superhero peers, Bridgman's alter ego hangs up his crime fighting, cape-like robes at day's end, nighttime his creative fortress of solitude, afterhours his poetic domain.

I don't know if this is in fact true. I like to believe so. I've spent time with both characters – the likeable Bruce Wayne persona as well as skilled poet P.W. Bridgman. *A Lamb* not only welcomes us into the author's realm, but props open the door to his secret citadel. Bridgman's musicality and romance language fluency come through in meter, tempo and an umami-esque richness in each lyrical line. His narrative style can seamlessly deliver razor wit – BAM – with a heart-rending KAPOW!

From the outset, lamb triggers a mosaic of metaphor – frailty, play, sacrifice, and slaughter. Our journey's mapped, Charon sporting a sardonic grin in "Time's Forward Gear" as the ferryman loosens a hawser line: "Mister D'Eath leans calmly in the doorway – / spectral, handsomely framed, a stylish flâneur."

Bridgman simultaneously guides and conducts, directing the reader while encouraging free jazz interpretation. "Three Lamentations" bebops us from "7/4 Time" through "Thirty-Six Bars" with an al coda skip to "Sonnet Form," pulling us back toward the boat with a bard's barbs. But in "No Writers Were Harmed in the Making of This Whiskey," we simply can't shake the hook, coaxed on monofilament to an inevitable net and priest: "Kathleen, Fionnuala and Valeria revel in their / unknowing freedom. Glad and carefree, they / periodically check their new highlights and twilights / in the Vauxhall's rear-view mirror. They laugh / and chatter while, as the afternoon fades, / Kathleen drives them all home from the hairdresser's / in Magherafelt back to Knockcloghrim – / to Knockcloghrim where a cheap quartz clock / ticks bravely on and where, like an unexploded artillery shell, / the end of the world awaits their return."

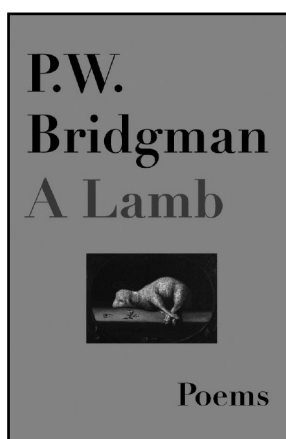
Another nod to Northern Ireland and the Ulsterbus bombing, which Bridgman weaves home to Vancouver by way of Heaney and Sinéad Morrissey in "There Was Fire in Magherafelt" – a tidy transatlantic crisscross: "There were no surviving signs, no pitting of nearby concrete even / (we looked); / no memorials nor misspelled spray-can epitaphs: Tiocfaidh ár lá!"

Yet our author/mediator knows precisely when we're due for recess from deliberation, with "V-P Sales, One Year Into Retirement" delivering laconic humour: "New man-bun. / Same / old / head."

And on our side of the pond Bridgman once more pays poetic homage, this time to the best blacksmith in "The Purdy Poems," with "Party of the Second Part" and "For God's Sake, Geddes, Call Him 'Al.'" To my delight I was there to witness Bridgman wave his bladed poem at a receptive Geddes, like a well-versed, affectionate mugger: "I didn't guess, tho, that at sixty- / five I'd sit myself down to / pen you a jeezly billet- / doux; that I'd find myself / writing you a god- / damned, buck / knife-shaped / love po- / em"

No, P.W. Bridgman is not who he appears to be. The mild-mannered crime fighter leads a double life as accomplished poet. *A Lamb* proves it. I didn't intend to unmask the man. Kindly keep it a secret. Our metropolis needs him.

Vancouver author, poet, songwriter Bill Arnott is the bestselling nonfiction author of *Dromomania* and *Gone Viking*. His poetry, articles and reviews are published in Canada, the US, UK, Europe and Asia. Bill's series Left Coast Poetry Beat is published by the League of Canadian Poets and the Federation of BC Writers.

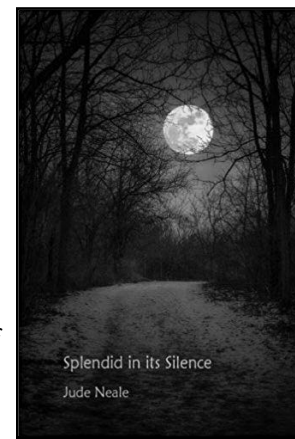


A Lamb
P.W. Bridgman
Ekstasis Editions, 2018
118 pages
\$23.95

Splendid in its Silence by Jude Neale

Review by Cynthia Sharp

Splendid in its Silence (SPM Publications) is a must have. There's a texture to a Jude Neale poem – power, gentleness, subtlety and truth all in one. Each poem is crafted precisely. She is a master of editing, as well as innuendo and imagery. We feel right there with her in the immediacy of each vivid image, from the moon as, "ice cream melting in a cobalt blue dish," to a loved one "ready to let go of earth...and become part of sky." There is so much in each mesmerizing breath, I'm reminded of the Zen wisdom, "A grain of sand contains all land and sea." *Splendid in its Silence* is masterfully designed, every poem a gift of depth in an economy of words. Neale's technical expertise with her craft offers galaxy after galaxy of delicious, life-affirming light. Highly recommended!ry seaside ellipsis.



Splendid in its Silence
Jude Neale
SPM Publications
£7.50

Cynthia Sharp is the author of *Rainforest in Russet* (Silver Bow Publishing, 2018) and *The Light Bearers in the Sand Dollar Graviton* (Sweetgrass in the Wind, 2018). She is a full member of the League of Canadian Poets and on the executive of the Federation of BC Writers.

The Dirty Knees of Prayer by Timothy Shay

Review by Cynthia Sharp

Timothy Shay's *The Dirty Knees of Prayer* (Caitlin Press) is rich and delicious, eloquently crafted with meaningful caesura and deep imagery. Shay speaks to our humanity in strong, respectful poems like "Just A Girl." His work flows seamlessly and leaves the recipient with a gift of crystallized images, his two-year-old daughter "a tiny Rodin sculpture on a rock deep in the drapes of Emily Carr's forest..." Poetry is the dessert of the literary arts and this collection is one is to be savoured over and over.

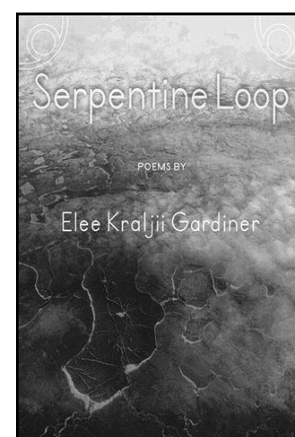


The Dirty Knees of Prayer
Timothy Shay
Halfmoon Bay: Caitlin Press
\$18.00

Serpentine Loop by Elee Kraljii Gardiner

Review by Cynthia Sharp

Serpentine Loop by Elee Kraljii Gardiner (Anvil Press) is precisely laid out in an easy to navigate motif of figure skating. It's a powerful work that invites readers into the rainy climate of expensive Vancouver, capturing the loneliness we call solitude with truths like, "hear us tapping on the stucco." In its empathy and compassion, the collection elevates readers to touch and grasp their own "defiant act of communion," to weave magic until the desire for reciprocal, meaningful connection transcends isolation. Insightful and concise all at once.



Serpentine Loop
Elee Kraljii Gardiner
Anvil
\$18.00

***Blood Orange* by Heidi Garnett**

Review by Candice James

There is a very predominant thread of childhood trauma and growing up in the shadow of the ravages of World War II that weaves its way in and out of the pages of this poetry collection; and there is a surreal landscape of imagination and imagery bound into the very fabric of the poems.

The imagery immediately takes charge right from the first poem “Gdansk Redux”: Memories are windows hung in the sky, glass panes / You press your face against to see who lives inside. / Is he dead or alive?”

In “The Key” Garnett offers sage advice with perfect poetic aplomb: “Be careful / and live your life as if days are minutes. / Don’t count on second chances. Mind what you say. / Words can be little savages / who stick matches between your toes / and light them. Don’t play with fire.”; and her metaphor for death is such a thing of beauty: “the aroma of death, / emanations of flower petals burned on life’s altar.”

In her poem “Past Perfect” recalling her father’s death, the poet compares life and death; body and spirit to sky and earth as one entity and the last four lines are indeed a succulent dessert for the reader to feast upon: “The moon begins its slow ascent, a lantern / held aloft. Starts clutching rucksacks / to their fiery chests follow close behind. / Sky and earth indivisible now, one seamless garment.” And there are some fabulous lines in “The Last Dance”: The bone of the river fractured / our breath braiding into a lovely rope.”

“Breath Sounds”, a terrific poem, is my favourite of my favourites (too many to choose from). It is the perfect poem to end the book. “I believe the sun / is a rusted clock and my life is built on minutes, / but I’m not afraid.” /// “Breath held in abeyance, winter’s cold dream begins / to drift awake and ground fog lifts from its damp bed / to taste young forsythia buds with its long fingers. / Sleep is an elbow on which eternity leans.”

Blood Orange is filed with blatant memories that shock and indelible images that forever underscore the meaning of the word beauty.

Candice James is a poet, musician, visual artist, singer songwriter. She was Poet Laureate of New Westminster, BC for two 3 year terms 2010-2016. and awarded the title of Poet Laureate Emerita in November 2016 by the City. She is the author of thirteen poetry books, the most recent *The Water Poems* (Ekstasis Editions 2017).

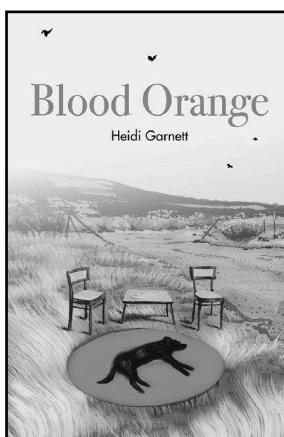
***Cemetery Compost* by Murray Reiss**

Review by Candice James

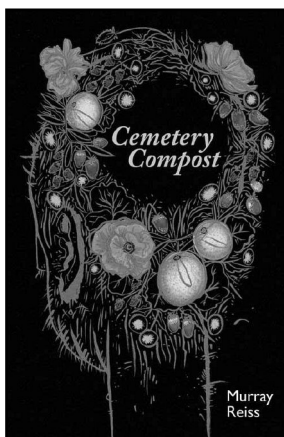
Cemetery Compost overturns the tombstones of loss, rebirth, memory, and castigation leaving the reader with an innate feeling of something betrayed and forgotten; sacred and remembered. There is a rich sadness in these poems that defies penury. Age, death, loss and movement toward the ever-elusive point of demise permeate the pages of this collection and leave a paper cut on the reader’s mind.

In “Your Enemy’s Heart” the surreal takes shape in columns of misty images: “Walls of fire divide the hours / and no one can sort the shapes / that move between them. // Hands break through the disfigured skin / of cities, clutching at clotted, heaving air.”

We glimpse life being taken out for a cantor and exercised on the racetrack of indecision where we wager and hedge our shaky bets in the poem “Kinder To Forget”: We wait with our blinkered horses / while the answers are auctioned off.” And in “Mandarin Ghosts” Reiss nicely and oh so succinctly describes an intriguing yet annoying



Blood Orange
Heidi Garnett
Frontenac House
Poetry
92 pages
\$15.95



Cemetery Compost
Murray Reiss
Frontenac House
Poetry
90 pages
\$15.95

aspect of aging: “Some days I go into town / and everybody looks like somebody else / departed, deceased, or lost.”

Cemetery Compost is a rich mix of style & content and diction & syntax. Many of these poems missed their mark with me, but some were bang on and shattered the bullseye.

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The Woman Who Went to the Moon

by Rosemary Clewes

Review by Candice James

This collection of poetry is a combination of memoir and insight into an outsider’s short stint spent in the Arctic village of Igloolik. Clewes successfully weaves folk-lore tales and current community life into a blanket that warms the chill of the immense northern landscape.

In “Dark Descending” these words beautifully paint the essence of Igloolik: ‘the white frozen sum of the world / sinks inside twilight’s blue pelt.’ And in the poem “Igloolik” the poet’s paintbrush continues to bring the north alive with vibrant creativity; “if you stay in the town / that lies in the crook/ of the bay’s shady elbow / it’ll be a few days / before the sun bowls any heat down these streets.”

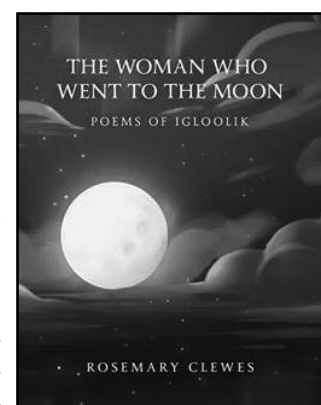
The poet pulls us along on her northern word sleigh as she delves into how important it is in the Arctic outback to have and hear the “elders” events witnessed retold as expressed in these lines excerpted from the poem “Witness”: ‘the weave of worlds yoked / to the silence of his mind’. And then, in a 180 degree turn, Clewes immerses us in a horrific old Eskimo tale passed down through generations; the word of mouth reiteration of events their forebears have seen and heard in years gone by. There is a gory bloodletting of old myth onto the snowy page in “The Sun and the Moon” where the Sun is the sister and the Moon is her brother: ‘She took her knife, sharpened it, cut off one of her breasts and tossed it to her brother, saying ‘Since you seem to be so fond of me, eat me then!’

In the poem “Ruth” gorgeous images of Igloolik abound in graceful and poetic dance: “you dip your brush in water paint / snow’s cursive as light bather in blue time - / crystals freezing on the page. // when your brush loses / its way you return to the horizon / where the season’s / Inuksuk shoulders the day.’

The poetic painting of life in Igloolik is vividly expressed in “Iglu” with word images of magazine pages glued to the walls, skins on the floor to sit on, sealskins wrapped around human shoulders and the warmth evidenced in the following lines: ‘Let the winter house speak to the walls / leaving no trace of the joins mortared by / moonlight’s blue flame.’

With the weave of the wand, her pen, Rosemary Clewes serves up a literary feast of poetic magic as she takes us on a magical, mystical sleigh ride through the pristine, white land of the ‘long moon’ and the culture of ‘Igloolik’. After leaving this feast for the mind, the reader’s soul will truly be sated!

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The Woman Who Went to the Moon
Rosemary Clewes
Innana Publications
2017, 60 pages
\$14.95

The Water Poems by Candice James

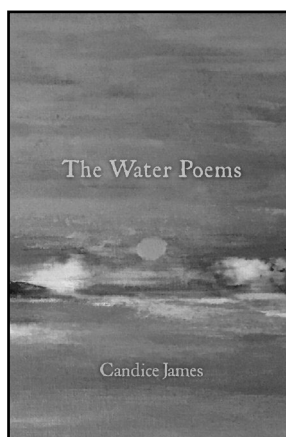
Review by Josie Di Sciascio-Andrews

Golden Sky, one of Candice James' most beautiful acrylic paintings graces the glossy cover of this spellbinding poetry collection. Bold hues of turquoise and orange, invite us to turn each pristine page into a world of sunlight and waves, memories and flights of imagination, woven through the unifying metaphor of water. In pale blue font, the title leads us to quell our thirst in the tranquility of the Tao through the wisdom of Lao Tzu, that "nothing is softer or more flexible than water, yet nothing can resist it."

Birth, childhood, the body, love, loss and death are distilled in the ripple and teardrop. We are water becoming, until in the end, we are once again water. Your body is a river -engulfed by the ocean -tide sweeps you away -I have become the rain. Candice James paints wondrous, imagistic metaphors that linger as luminous mindscapes. Vast expanses of twinkling, shimmering beaches merge with infinity -shorelines of seashells and dreams, echo murmurs that ebb and flow through the inchoate world and the seasons' storms, refashioned and reborn into quintessential new days .

Water in all its forms and permutations flows through the lines of this collection. It is the unifying principle which enlivens body, landscape and memory with its vital essence. The poet stands at the edge of a dream, where mist rising from the sea, scrawls letters in the colours of hydrogen, and discloses secrets stolen from the soul of the universe. For it is water, the prima materia of alchemy, also linked in contemporary esoteric teachings with emotion and intuition, that transpires through these verses. It is both a physical and a metaphysical element. Faces of the past float in street puddle mirrors and years, ages, faces, tears trading spaces, reverse through each other spiralling the seasons, riding the seasons of life, going past the end, to the beginning -through the waters of eternity and the book re-opens. In a continuous cycle of osmosis, water vivifies, cleanses, heals, purifies, inspires, evokes, remembers, blends, bends, destroys, baptizes and resurrects. In its paradoxical duality, it drowns, yet is the ultimate life giver.

In a synesthesia of sensorial allegories, these poems are vessels that transport us into the currents of its pools, rivers, lakes and oceans in a seamless rhythm of tears and



The Water Poems
Candice James
Ekstasis Editions
104 pages
\$23.95

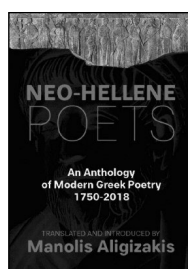
raindrops. We are bodies of water. The outer landscape merges with our inner world, and vice versa. We are led to feel the tide within us, to become one with the surrounding, aqueous state of flux. This is writing illuminated by an artistic and musical sensibility. From pale ochre, to burnished orange, to turquoise blue, we move through the ritual passage of first light -becoming a rainbow -on lakes of blue pearly waters emblazoned with diamond dust.

In her poetry as in her art, Candice James paints moments of breathtaking colour and sensuous metaphors brimming with magic and sonoric delights. Gleaming turquoise waters and a hot sun spilling July onto the white silver sands of my mind. There's a swish in the wind, a sway in the sky and whispers sashaying in sweet overtones -drawing us deeper into the depths of reverie. This is poetry that engages and entrances all our senses. Marvelous beauty on a cut glass lake, two lovers' hearts circle each other like newborn binary stars. An ebbing sun is sewn to an evanescent moon to lay on a twilight robe of pastels, while on a star dusted sea, the poet dips her pen into the swirling night.

In *The Water Poems*, we behold stars in free-fall above the lip of a black onyx lake, raining down sweet inspiration, in a surreal landscape where, in a moment of madness, the sun kisses the moon. Pivotal to the gist of this collection, the poem Listen to the Rain, takes us by the hand to listen in on the soft, subtle tones of sorrow and tears falling from the sky's eyes. There is a cleansing to this wet, for after the downpour, the rain smiles through the sun, wind, moon and stars. The storm brings catharsis and rebirth as new water cycles through the cosmic rain dance, filling the canyons of the mind, overflowing the rivers of the heart, rinsing spirit clean.

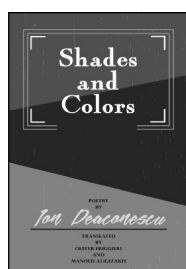
This is one of the most wonderful poetry collection I have read in a long time. I was swept away by the beauty of each poem's vivid and rhythmic metaphors such as, my eyes overflowing with moons, stars and sky – I've become the rain – I am the water. Candice James coalesces poetic consciousness with outer bodies of water, synthesizing it all in her poetry. Our seeming solidity is but an illusion. Your body's a river and a child on the shore is, but a tiny wave. H₂O above, H₂O below, the waters of life embrace us. I have highlighted only the most salient verses to give readers a taste of *The Water Poems*. It is one of those rare books that left me wishing to return to it again and again. In its pages, the dream breaks open - clouds gather and form - the day dissolves and so too reality and in the end, our lives, along with everything we know. Only poetry remains. Words scribbled in a dusty old book, will keep the secrets of things past, for someone to someday read and remember. As the poet eloquently writes, when I leaf through those pages in the rain, you're there in every bittersweet refrain.

Josie Di Sciascio-Andrews has written five collections of poetry: *The Whispers of Stones*, *Sea Glass*, *The Red Accordion* and *Letters from the Singularity* and her most recent collection *A Jar of Fireflies*.



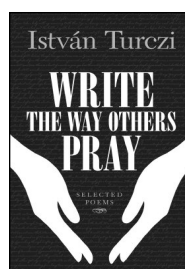
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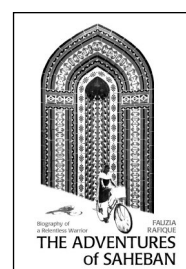
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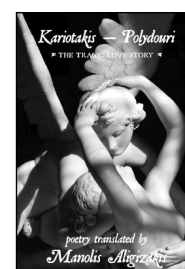
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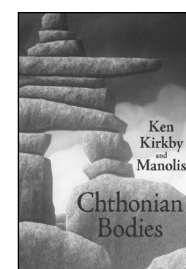
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