

CPR

*Resuscitating the art
of Canadian poetry*

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Contents

Randy Kohan

from *Hammers & Bells* page 2
Autumn ritual
November

Jude Neale

from *A Blooming* page 3
The Home Front
Holding On
To Look Within
Flowers in Winter for America

Elizabeth Cunningham

from *A Fragile Grace* page 4
A Day of Grace Together
Osprey
Peregrine

John La Greca

from *Homeless Memorial* page 5
Two-Headed Poem
In a Town Where the Moments of
Darkness Are Continuous

Corinne Larochelle

from *Woman with Camera* page 6
from *Rooms*

Len Gasparini

from *The Social Life of Stirring* page 7
I Sometimes Wish
The Books of Jobs
"La Petite Mort"



Photo by Elizabeth Cunningham



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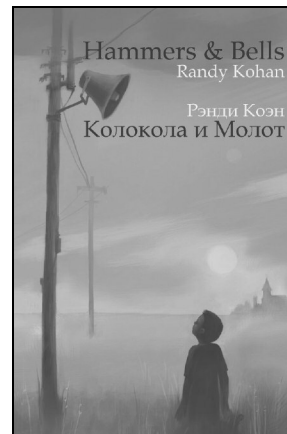
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from Hammers & Bells

Randy Kohan

translated into Russian by
Alisa Ganieva & Anastasia Strokina

Ekstasis Editions
ISBN 978-1-77171-299-6
Poetry
205 Pages
6 x 9
\$25.95



Randy Kohan
has published
three collections
of poetry with
Ekstasis Editions
– Hammers &
Bells, Rain of
Naughts, and
Hive. One
translated poem,
*Echo from St.
Andrew's*,
appeared in the Moscow daily newspaper
Nezavisimaya Gazeta in 2015. Between 2014 and
2018, he collaborated with Zaira Makhacheva,
Alisa Ganieva, Anastasia Strokina and Asya
Dzhabrailova on the dual-language version of
Hammers & Bells. The subject of a 2019
documentary film by Edmonton filmmaker Hans
Olson, Randy lives in Edmonton with his wife and
their two sons.

Autumn ritual

I catch them shyly bathing
chalk white poplars naked
a huddled crowd of trunks;
the open prairie field is sheathed
in ruddy copper brush
flowing threads of golden grass
and shavings, copper, dry.

Heat's conductor, copper...

as if winged Gabriel
had been here lightly passing...

O, to be out there in that field!
Cracking it open with two running feet
and a racing, pounding heart!
Freely exchanging energy!
Where no money
is demanded by the artist
where creation
is ten-tenths of the law
and where poplars carry this
deep in their wood.

Осенний обряд

Внезапное видение: робкие купальщики,
белые, как мел, обнаженные тополя,
тесно прижимаются друг к другу.
Бесконечная прерия в ножнах
медно-красных кустов,
усыпанная перьями сухих рыжих стружек,
расшитая золотистыми нитями травы.

Медь – проводник тепла.
как будто крылатый Гавриил
недавно пролетел.

Оказаться бы мне в том поле!
Взорвать его тишину пульсацией сердца!
Вбежать, ворваться!
Отдавать и впускать энергию!
Там Творцу не нужно платить,
там важно само творение,
там в сердцевине тополей сокрыта
тайна бытия.

Перевод А. Строкиной

November

Trees
and the November sun hangs
just barely above them,
heavy, like the eye of a thief,
forced to witness, through bars of cloud,
the extent of its crime.

Like thick fingers,
a few lucky branches
dip themselves in stolen warmth
amidst a standing legion of elm,
an army in defeat.

A shock of sparrows
shoot their song
toward the amber thief.
(Forgiveness? April seeds?)

Except for one.

Mocking, perhaps
in mourning
this bird sings
lower than the rest
sounding off
for all the trees that have been plundered
for all the birds
that won't live
to see the Spring.

Ноябрь

Деревья, деревья...
повисло ноябрьское солнце,
едва не цепляя верхушки,
повисло тяжёлым оком ворюги,
который сквозь облачную
решётку,
вынужден видеть
свои злодеяния...

Горсть веток, удачливых веток,
точь-в-точь – чьи-то алчные пальцы,
нырнули в ворованное тепло
в кольцо
легиона
вязов,
армия – голая, жалкая...

Копна воробьёв
Пуляет песней
в янтарного вора.
(Что в этих выстрелах-трелях?
Прощение солнцу-ворюге?
Апрельские семена?)

И лишь один – исключение.

Глумится? Нет! Эта птичка
и вправду в трауре,
и поёт
ниже прочих,
трубя
всем лишённым убранства деревьям,
всем птицам,
которым не выжить,
которым не видеть Весны.

Перевод А. Ганиевой

from A Blooming

Jude Neale

The Home Front

He was taken lifelong
prisoner by the war.

The worm of rage
and dirty fear
were all that was left

when his only enemy
was his wife's cool barbs:

To act like a man.
To be in control.

And for God's sake
pick up those papers
and read the news

of what was going on
in his own house.

Couldn't he see the kids' smirk
or venomous toss of the head
whenever she entered the room?

She beat him
with her vengeful insistence

to do something to his son
who had saved all her lies
for the social worker.

Miss Brown had glanced
at my brother's torn back,

gazed at the shining wood floor.

She ate the home baked sweets
dabbing her disapproval

right off of her pert little mouth.

A husband's deep seam of anger
had been mined
by his treacherous wife.

Later,

he took the comfort
of whiskey

to stop the sickening echo
of the thwack of the strap

across tender young skin.

Holding On

I hold my breath
as if you could stay
beside me
in this still room.

I'm not emptied
out of this burning
grief that lays
its heavy hand
on the clench
of my heart.

My child you were
the gleam
In my mirror

when you ran
toward
across the meadow

parting the grass
with your light.

To Look Within

Don't look in the mirror
or at the cool skin of water
to discover your lovely face,
my mother always said.

So instead I stroked
my beauty deep within.

Nudged at the warmth
and yearning
stored in my marrow.

I love you I say
to myself.

Even as I drift
away from remembering.

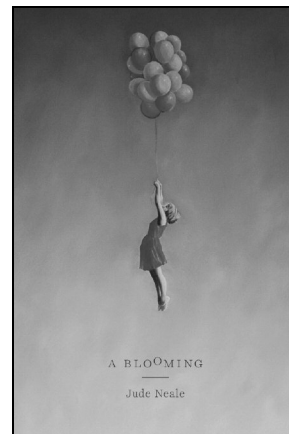
I'm a velvet night blooming,
heavy with the scent of lilies.

I love you I say
to the wind and the sky.

For it grows, a fireball
of light spreading

from my incandescent orb.

Ekstasis Editions
ISBN 978-1-77171-318-4
Poetry
90 Pages
6 x 9
\$23.95



Jude Neale is a Canadian poet, classical vocalist, spoken word performer and mentor. She has been shortlisted, highly commended and finalist for many international and national competitions. Jude has written seven books, but enjoys giving readings most. Her book, A Quiet Coming of Light, A Poetic Memoir (leaf press) was a finalist for the 2015 Pat Lowther Memorial Award. In 2018, Jude and Bonnie Nish started an online collaboration which lead them to write Cantata in Two Voices (Ekstasis Editions) in fifty challenging days. Her forthcoming book We Sing Ourselves Back (leaf press) will appear in 2019. Jude recently collaborated with Thomas RL Beckman, the great viola voice of BC. He composed the music, The St. Roch Suite, for the Prince George Symphony Orchestra. Jude performed her poetic prose narrative before the start of each movement. She loves the log channel.

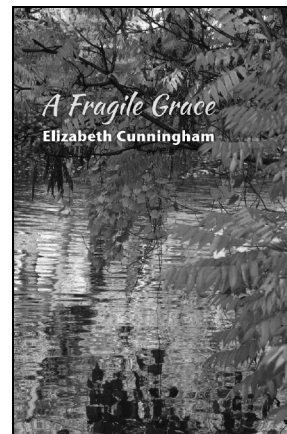
Flowers in Winter for America

The snow comes softly,
settles onto the long necked daffodils.
They know how to rise above the chill,
stand as one, though they are muffled
by the cold batting stuffed into their mouths.
They know the time to sing
their golden throated songs,
of reaching for the sky,
is when the earth is hard.
It is true their numbing ache
depends on silence and resignation –
which are the tunes of death.
Together they won't bend
to this white and angry winter,
when it is so easy
to forget about
their luminous light.

from A Fragile Grace

Elizabeth Cunningham

Ekstasis Editions
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Poetry
129 Pages
6 x 9
\$25.95



A Day of Grace Together *for my husband on his 60th birthday*

Let us create
a day of grace together.
The morning will be cool and misty,
the reds and golds of autumn
muted, but still vibrant.

Another hundred wild geese
will rise from the river
while we sit by the water
with cups of hot coffee
clutched in our chilly fingers.

I will make for you a breakfast
of the fruits and herbs of autumn,
and we will share the same food
as we have so many times before.

We will walk the familiar cedar pathway,
damp and fragrant
with the fall of leaves,
and cushioned with countless years of humus.

The dogs will romp around us
with all the enthusiasm only they can convey
about that single moment
they live to the hilt.

A Great Blue Heron will erupt
from underneath the dam
and startle
hell out of the water.

Though this has happened many times before
it will seem like the first time
because those steel-blue feathers
and sword-like beak are never quite believable.

We will soak up all the golden autumn
our aching bones will take.
We will sit and smile at the blinding sun.
The green will linger only a little longer on
September's trees.

At the end of the day,
we will lie down together
and sleep again in each other's arms,
my head on your shoulder.

I will wish your sixtieth year
to be happy,
and your life long on this earth
in my company.

Osprey

An Osprey
circled the river today
in the hot white sky
of the summer morning.

Twice it folded its shaggy wings,
dropped with the weight
of fearless, certain gravity,
and clutched at the depths
of the relentless flowing water
at something hopeless and flickering.

Whatever it was that had been there
The massive bird missed.
It rose again, staggering into the air,
Until, breathless,
Its stare pierced the water.

Then again,
like a sheer and perfect answer,
it shot into the river and grabbed.
What creature skirmished away?
There is such silence beneath the ripples
of this river.

The white hawk shook off the water
as it shouldered all that sky.
So high it wound around again.
What triggered its next release?

This time I heard the whack of its wings
upon the water,
The snapping lock of its talons,
saw the whipping struggle
of the brown and gleaming fish,
the glint in the yellow eye of the Osprey
as it flew at last
over the green and sighing trees,
away from the shining river
with its prey lying limp
and lifeless in its clutches.

Sometimes I swim alone in that water.
I often wonder
what it is that slithers below me,
what hovers above,
and what will claim at last
my own frail
and shimmering life.

Peregrine

Beyond the grit and screech
of the grim city,
a restless field of cumulus shifts
above piercing cliffs of sheer glass.

*Born in Toronto, **Elizabeth***

***Cunningham**
moved to Eden
Mills, near
Guelph, with her
three children
and husband for
a teaching
position in the
90's, Elizabeth
volunteered for
many years at the Eden Mills Writer's Festival
where eventually she read her own poetry after
winning first prize in the literary competition at
that event in 2015. This award encouraged her to
keep working towards publishing this collection of
poetry.*

If you look up to find the sky,
it is too bright to see in the towering glare.
At your feet, gray pigeons shuffle
through the rumble and dust.

Your shuttered heart batters
against all the closed doors
waiting for a crack
to let you get in.

In the city there is a hawk
that soars between the skyscrapers
and nests in their broken crevices.
Its searching eyes ceaselessly seek release.

Slick slate feathers
are layered with soot,
reptilian toes
rasp at the windows.

Hunched shoulders
angle upwards
as amber eyes
glare at an opening in the sky.

Great grey wings shudder
as they rise.
The raptor flies
towards its fate.

Relentlessly,
the world is turning.
Far below,
the pigeons wait.

from Homeless Memorial

John La Greca

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Poetry
132 Pages
6 x 9
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Two Headed Poem

My father was a contradiction.
In the old Vernon, a man was the brutal head of
his family.
He could profess love of God and tell me
That he was undamaged by the gore and blood of
war.
After 1967, my sisters and I were starting to be
too much
For him to put up with. We were challenging his
authority.
The stereo was proclaiming how Savoy Brown
Believed that love was a kick in the head.
The CBC News would have to wait.
My sisters demanded the car keys.
They had plans to party,
Stay drunk and not come home for a week.
One night, my father asked me to accompany
him
On a drive around town.
We ended up parked by the post office.
It was Fall and it was dark.
It was cool in the car,
Despite having the heater on.
My father started on an aimless commentary
About the situation at home.
He said that as head of the family
A man must know when to break backs.
He told me that Old Man Mather
Knew how to do this.
My father said that Old Man Mather
Was having problems with one of his sons.
They drove out to a parking lot
Up by the Army Camp.
Mr. Mather challenged his son to a fight.
No matter what the outcome of the fight was,
The son was not coming home.
Mr. Mather made it clear
That his son would not survive.
The son chose not to fight
And to come home.

My father ended his story,
Clicked on the ignition and said
It was time to go home.
For years after, I said nothing to my father,
Watched the CBC News
And read as much as I could.
I read what I wanted.
At least he didn't beat me,
And I didn't become sexually precocious too
early.
I became a writer.
I required periodic internments in psychiatric
wards
Due to my father's Catholicism
And subliminal understanding
Of taboo subjects not easily dealt with at that
time.

I have an early memory of my father.
He was a man who would torment me
As a five-year-old boy for small indiscretions.
I got lost at five. I went for a walk
To look for my father. I saw his van drive by
Across the street but he didn't stop.
I know I was lost for days,
But I have no idea how I got home.
My father was always telling me of the little boys
Who were raped and killed in Polson Park.
He was always driving my sisters off singly to talk,
To take them for ice cream or a pop.
All three of my sisters had incredible knowledge
of sexuality
For young Catholic girls under the age of twelve.
It didn't come from my mother.
She was always too embarrassed to talk about it
And my father was always of the opinion
That it should wait until we were older.

My father placed a lot of responsibility
On his children to raise themselves.
I had one sister who did all the cooking,
Cleaning and shopping.
My father called her his "little mother."
My sister was sexually active early.
She left home at fourteen.
It might be relevant that my father testified in a
rape case

At the time. Three girls were at a party
My father attended at a friend's.
They accused the old man of rape.
My father said this didn't happen. My sister left
home.
My father gave up drinking.
The middle sister was as responsible as the older
sister.
She got involved with boys at an early age.
They were drug addicts, alcoholics, and physically
abusive.
My sister remained dutiful to my father and
mother
Until they died. Nothing my sister did was good
enough.
She got divorced.
I have a third sister who seems to have undergone
The same kind of treatment as the others:
Drive off on a date with father,
Have the law dictated to her, gets nice treatment
And is expected to be mother for a while.
My sister got her Grade Twelve,
Got a job, left home, left Vernon,
And went to work for her older sister and her
husband.
My sister had odd reading habits.
She seemed to like books on torture, fetishism
and murder.
She never had many relationships.
Her boyfriends were drifters, alcoholics

John La Greca is Canada's Charles Bukowski, writing with deep and at times blistering honesty and humour of a side of Okanagan culture never seen in tourist brochures. For nearly fifty years, he has been our greatest poet of the streets. For all this time, he has lived with a mind given many diagnoses, including schizophrenia and obsessive compulsive disorder. He has been in and out of care since 1967, surviving on inadequate government and community support, drawn by poverty, curiosity and community into close relationships with homeless and disenfranchised people on the margins of society.

And the type who would abandon her
And have other girlfriends at the same time.
She never married.

In a Town Where the Moments of Darkness Are Continuous

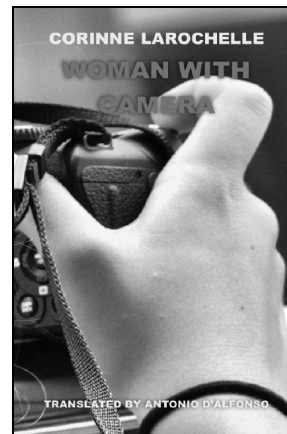
Laura would arrive in the glow of the street lamps
In the parking lot,
All dressed in black,
With a purple ribbon in her hair.
She wandered erratically
Towards Polson Park. 11 pm.
It was like a whisper from a Christ
To follow Her,
But she disappeared,
As usual. Neither of us
Had Salvation in mind.
I have the life I have
Because I chose to shoot myself
In the foot with a 12-gauge shot gun.
I have no toes. The shot gun
Is repeatedly in action,
And I have no leg to stand on.
It crucifies —
Excuse the mixed metaphorical violence —
Me in place.

from Woman with Camera

Corinne Larochelle

translated by Antonio D'Alfonso

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from Rooms

In the white room, my quest for symbiosis begins with the surface of electric lightbulbs. The lampshades removed, transparency spreads across the walls. Desire grows within, my partitions rise: I can't welcome everyone. In the white room, I ponder on how much shadow is needed to avoid buckling.

I am convinced by a hip inclining
a transvestite with smiling eyebrows
says 'Okay'.

Men and women
parade over my bed
time enough for grain
to build up on negatives.

Battle of ill-matched shadows,
ferocity of black, impatience of white
ransack artifice.

She is not sure what to expect from this magnetic space. The hotel room rented late at night. A house of horrors on Coney Island. She believes only in what is visible: a Christmas tree bright in the vacant living-room. Her sights are transfixed on the threading of the carpet. How can she anchor this body of light?

The origin of thought, the origin of life. Every day I come back to the dark room with my fingertips cutoff, trying to find a spark of fire. It was in the unlithotel room that I noticed him first, towel wrapped around his naked body. His hat brought out deformities. His mustache revealed a smile, in his left eye, hints of an interior garden. All night long, purple bite marks, he taught me how to knead amidst get.

I run into him in the underground
below a rundown building
he is blowing into a clarinet
negating the gloom of his tomorrows.

Precious time can be recycled.

He follows the music on the sheet,
each note for me is as tangible as light.

In the morning I'm aware
of the aligned stars
on his chin.
I want him all to myself.

I ask him to move the joker
to the doorstep
and to dance like a rictus
that rejuvenates him, a flame.

What his mouth would be like
regaining light.

He possesses a strange rapport with intimacy
that disfigures him, so I focus
on the tip of his nose.

The turning key is quiet
the oracle announces:
two children follow him.

Springs of sorts on which to bounce.

Shutters drawn, she feels uninhibited.
Arm touched, she becomes a sun ray, a flame, a
lip, inexplicably, reversibly, soft. Beauty of grey in
all its diversity, beauty of image developing, the
spirit appearing, impish, immaterial. In this world
of details scrutinized, shoulders are not as
tense, loosen up.

She sorts out the possibilities that lead to the land
of love. A beast stiffens when it is about to plunge
into a hoop of flames. Suddenly she is scared that it
will be cold again, harshness as real as abuse,
wounded horse tethered to a carriage.

With her brother, she is playing in a sandbox.
Her pleated dress, ribbons, patent leather shoes.
She can't remove her white gloves without her

Born in Three-Rivers, Quebec, Corinne Larochelle has published six books of poetry and a first novel, Le parfum de Janis (2015). She works and lives in Montreal.

father or mother yelling. Loneliness without end. She digs her hands into the granite sand. The earth creates landscapes best avoided. Someone once said that there is a time for matter, menstrual blood, and child's dribble. Chemistry of atoms is what constitutes territory.

She waves to him on the other side of the window-pane. Come, quickly, tiny hands, rope and pink mouth. Is it not a wonder what eyes perceive at first glance? Is it not a wonder to hear the howling when skin opens up and darkness is barged into? Come closer. Mouthful of love, dryness of throat.

Move slowly
but move.

The pajama
is a butterfly
on the negative.

I change
the magnifying glass lens, tiny scars
begin to glitter.

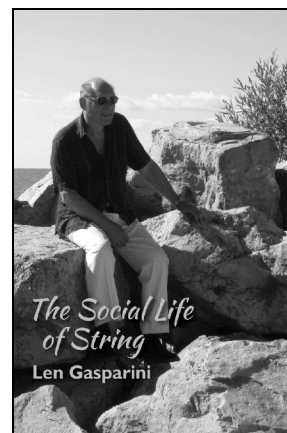
Into the fixer.

Around Mother
there are pictures
burning on her fingertips.

from The Social Life of String

Len Gasparini

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I Sometimes Wish

I sometimes wish that my life
were an unending road trip,

like traveling on the Trans-Canada
Highway or on Route 66,

with layovers along the way
and the weather always summery,

stopping only to gas up and eat,
flirt with the waitress

and glance at the scenery
just as I did way back

when heaven was a highway,
but not for a joyride

nor my way or the highway;
before seat-belts and radar

and being breathalyzed;
when hitchhiking was legal.

And so I am driving...
my destination—the horizon.

To reach it, I am driving
in the past lane.

The Book of Jobs

I grew up in Windsor, Ontario
where in the 1950s and early 60s
jobs were so plentiful that if you didn't have one
you were considered a lazy bum.
"Get a Job," sang jukebox and radio.

In one month I once found five different jobs.
I changed jobs out of boredom.
No applications or interviews. Employers
just looked at you and asked: *When can you start?*
I always went job-hunting on Fridays.

You could pick and choose jobs.
At 16 I got my driver's licence. All I did was
drive around the block and parallel park.
I dropped out of high school to get a job and buy
a car.

The longest I ever worked anywhere

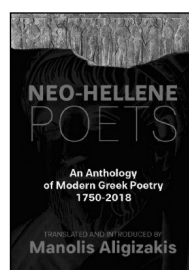
was four blue-collar years at Windsor Salt.
I might have stayed there,
but we went on strike for eight months.
My master-of-all-trades father used to say:
"You don't get rich working for someone else."

Ah, those olden days wax golden!
Nowadays, you can't even buy a job.
You need a police check which costs money
to land a part-time minimum-wage job.
I think we're advancing progressively backwards.

Len Gasparini is the author of numerous books of poetry, including *The Broken World: Poems 1967-1998* and a collection for children, *I Once Had a Pet Praying Mantis*. He is the author of three story collections, *Blind Spot*, *A Demon in My View* and *When Does a Kiss Become a Bite?*, and a work of nonfiction, *Erase Me*, with photographs by Leslie Thomson. In 1990, he was awarded the F. G. Bressani Literary Prize for poetry. He lives in Toronto.

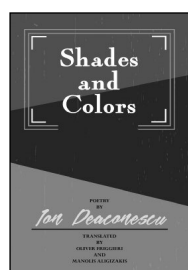
"La Petite Mort"

During the little death
I sometimes feel like I am Faust
on the Brocken.
It's not a spectre I see,
but the darkness inside
the darkness itself.



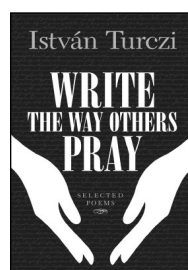
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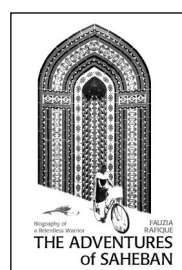
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poetry by
István Turczi

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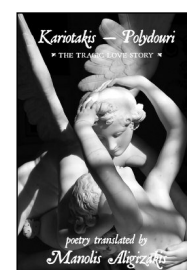
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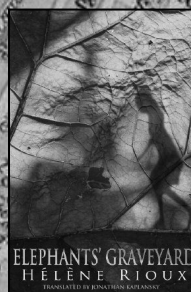
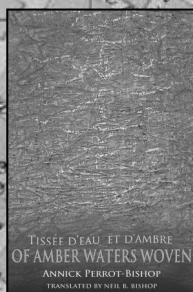
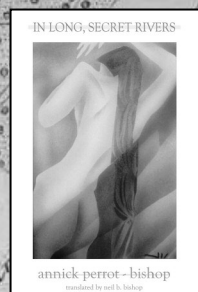
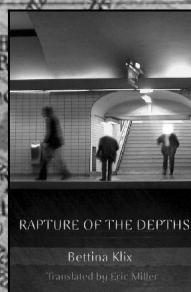
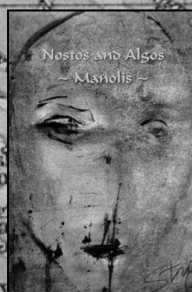
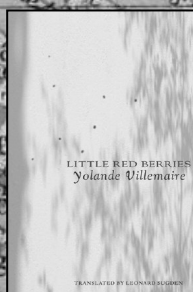
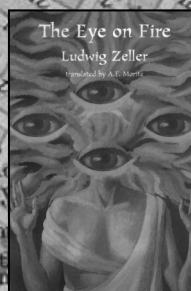
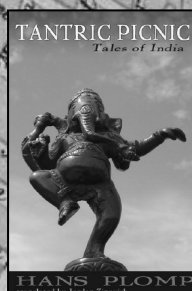
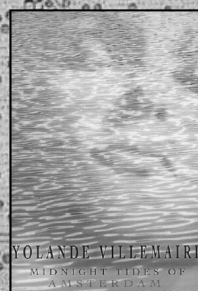
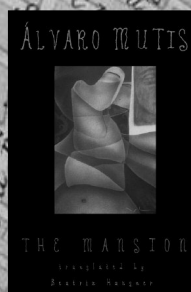
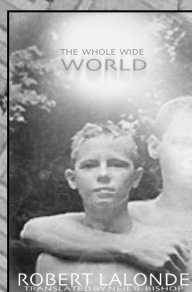
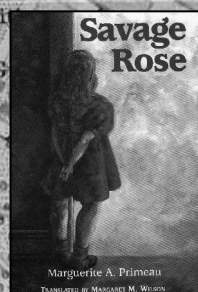
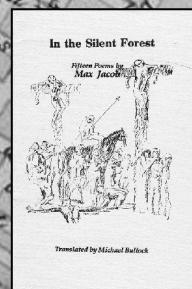
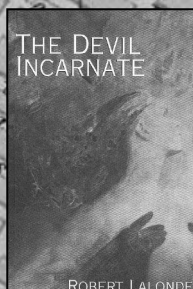
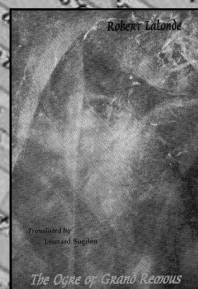
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