

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Laurel Ann Bogen: Five Poems

Laurel Ann Bogen · Wednesday, January 28th, 2015

Laurel Ann Bogen is the author of ten books of poetry and short fiction, including *Washing a Language; Fission; The Last Girl in the Land of the Butterflies* and *Rag Tag We Kiss*. In 2016 Red Hen Press will publish *All of the Above: New and Selected Poems 1975-2015*. She is a recipient of the Pacificus Foundation's Curtis Zahn Poetry Prize, two awards from the Academy of American Poets and a 2011 Pushcart Prize nomination. Her work has appeared in over 100 literary magazines and anthologies including *The Maverick Poets*, *California Poetry from the Gold Rush to the Present*, *The Outlaw Bible of American Poetry*, *Stand Up Poetry*.

Narrow Beds

The spare honest lines
of my girlhood intersect
with wood and linen
Corners neatly tucked
I dreamt alone
with a radio
under my pillow
to ease the nightly terrors
Vampires sucked the dark
Death coaxed slyly
like Southern Comfort

I dreamt alone
long legs became longer
sinew and joint extended
Terror shifted from vertebrae to groin
The womb drummed insistently
rapists scuttled from street lamps

I hunted boundaries
chanted pregnant lists
of lovers and college lecturers
clocked the seconds
from impulse to scream

slept in sheets of wild control

The demarcation of form —
bed, body, dream —
the weight of cloth
bore me down

There was a limit
a finite space
my body could not slip away.

(Avalanche)

(my secret name)

frozen tundra glints
in moonlight
as precise
as this
icicle
while fault lines slash
dissident crags into mountains
and the Gestapo
waits outside the window
in the snow
with its dogs
(will you say it?)

The Mother's Room

and this too is me
the dull sheen of purple jersey
daughter as crone
and behind that door
the mother's room
unknown women tend her
blonde mother of the plains
silent girls offer reflections to kiss
a cord to my abdomen glistens and throbs

and she spins that cord
and she spins and she twists
and when she is old
she spins
and when she is dead
she spins

The Power Lines Are Down

Current spilling into current
 I am cross-wired
 aborted energy
 mad with voltage
 I flash neon signals

Love me
 you

Fool
 I spill all crazy
 the fusion
 of teashops and suicides
 coming and going
 without shieldings

Meltdown
 meltdown
 whalebone and garter
 I will not be confined
 by steel casings
 or wedding rings
 my name is preceded
 by a warning —
 the power lines are down
 love me

Vulnerable Street

You have no idea
 but gear and shift
 engine ramming the dark
 the moon has no lock
 as you race down Vulnerable Street

in the twilight
 your hair flies like an exclamation
 forgive me it wails
 such consideration
 is the stuff of barricades
 the cinderblocks I stack
 one by one
 against you

Author photo by Alexis Rhone Fancher

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