

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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