

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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