

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Phoebe MacAdams: Four Poems

Phoebe MacAdams · Thursday, September 10th, 2015

Phoebe MacAdams was born and raised in New York City, but has lived in California most of her adult life, first in the poetry community of Bolinas in Northern California, and then in Ojai in Ventura County. She has been active in the Los Angeles literary community since her move here in 1986. She is a founding member of Cahuenga Press. (www.cahuengapress.com) She was also a founding member of the Los Angeles Poetry Festival and, for two years, ran the Gasoline Alley reading series on Melrose Avenue with poet Bill Mohr. She taught English and Creative Writing at Roosevelt High School in Los Angeles until her retirement in 2011. She lives in Pasadena with her husband, Ron Ozuna.

Phoebe MacAdams has published six books of poetry: *Sunday*, *Ever*, *Ordinary Snake Dance*, *Livelihood*, *Strange Grace*, and *Touching Stone*.



there are messages

the blue shirt of early afternoon
drives by in a Thunderbird;
a house finch watches detritus blow along the street;
the children wait for a plumber
who runs to retrieve a forgotten tool.

we have all lost track of
the brown couch cushions waiting by the curb,
the names that disappear when a car radio passes.

a teacher moves toward her classroom,
ignores the students who play hooky
listening to music on their i-phones.

this is a moment of seasonal confusion
and global destruction. yes, it's true;
even though Infinity Auto Insurance is on its way to the corner,
the black SUV from Nevada makes a U turn,

and speeds away.

efficient suitcases

I mean, we are always travelling,
 like the wild parrots of South Pasadena
 who arrived here on my first day,
 now moving from tree to tree,
 ambassadors of salt
 of talk,
 emissaries of Kamadeva, the exotic god
 who rides their backs into a future
 of ranunculus,
 winter guides, like polka dot socks or
 the parrot handled cups from my mother
 who thinned to the delicacy of bone,
 dying gracefully one afternoon
 after ordering groceries.
 See? Eternity again
 while sitting on the porch observing the camphor tree,
 No escape.
 Though the blueberry plant is coming back to life,
 the Japanese maple blossom
 falls perfectly from its branch.

rain

in Pasadena
 falls on pansies and blades of grass.
 I remember
 early morning sounds of New York City,
 the comfort of traffic,
 now,
 a little birdsong
 a little breeze.

My grandfather sat on porches
 and collected hinges
 in the Hudson River Valley where
 we went to the Catskill Game Farm
 and fed milk in baby bottles to baby lambs.

What controls our lives, its messiness,
 its precarious loveliness;
 is it memories
 or the wings of hummingbirds,

is it hinges and light?

these joys are temporary, and I praise them

over 100o today, yesterday 106o
when I didn't go to hear Dana Gioia at Vroman's,
having read his poems on line;
"new formalism"- why would you do that?
tie yourself up in old rhythms, smother
the exuberance that Walt won for us.
today I contemplated pictures at Avenue 50 Studio,
brave images of violence in Mexico
where artists who talk about killings are punished by death.

we are fortunate to walk these streets in any meter we choose
then come home to
turkey salad, jumbo artichokes, heirloom tomatoes,
frozen blueberry yoghurt.

Author photo by Alexis Rhone Fancher

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