

MARIA JACOBS: A SELECTION OF POEMS



Maria Jacobs

CWS/cf welcomes Maria Jacobs as our new Literary Editor. Born in The Netherlands, Maria moved to New York City and two years later came to Toronto in 1955. After raising a family of five and completing her university education, she became active in the literary community. For seven years she managed the Axle-Tree Coffee House in Toronto, and was the associate editor of *Waves* for several years. She is the publisher and editor of *Poetry Toronto*, and assistant editor of the *Canadian Journal of Genetics and Cytology*.

Together with Heather Cadsby, Maria Jacobs started the publishing house of Wolsak and Wynn Ltd., and co-edited the first book published by that company in 1983, *The Third Taboo*, a collection of poems on the subject of jealousy. She is the editor of an anthology of poems by Dutch women poets in translation, scheduled for publication by Netherlandic Press in 1985, and is presently finalizing a manuscript of poems to be published by Mosaic Press in the near future.

She is the author of *Precautions Against Death* (Mosaic Press, 1983), a powerful personal account, in prose and poetry, of the Nazi occupation of Holland and the persecution of the Jews.

SIAMESE TWINS SEPARATED

– Saturday 28 July 1984

Lin and Win Htut – names are important and should be mentioned – sundered now, gender bestowed or carved, your future roles assigned by experts.

Eighteen hours' darkness, and you wake no longer one but two imperfect humans, amputated, patched, unchosen marriage over, and the close familiar heartbeat gone for good.

if well can mean a little more than ease
and supervision all your lives.

Be well

the two of you some privacy where we have failed.
But may the powers reigning over you
decide to let you share a crib at least
until your wounds heal over and you've learned
that living is a lonely business.

God grant

JUST WAR

The dreams our son dreams now are dreams of war.
Crouching behind a concrete wall he throws grenades
into the middle distance while the dark
fires back at him and worse, and worse, at me –
his mother he must shield with his small frame
and all his wits.

Lost in his waking he comes to me for shelter
and my hands around his head my whispered
'I love you' will do only for now.

Soon we must use our hands to more advantage,
and drive away the clouds over his future.

This war is just. Our fighting words must be mightier
than his worst dream.

EXTINCTION

Extinction is not death
not yours or mine, my love.
Time was when we were not –
thinking of that causes no pain