

ILONA MARTONFI

The Woman by the River

Surrounded by fields
purple lilac, sycamore,

on the other side of the road
on orchard slopes down to the St. Lawrence.

The walled garden.
Red brick bungalow.
Moved to Anjou 1971 –

with your three daughters.

Spade and bucket of cold water

burlap covering roots –

Two five-year-old saplings
McIntosh apple trees

delivered by red pickup
Pépinère Jasmin.

For that moment,
you forgot you were a battered wife.

Ilona Martonfi is the author of two poetry books, Blue Poppy (2009), and Black Grass (2012). Ilona has published in Vallum, Accenti, The Fiddlehead, and Serai. She is the founder/producer of The Yellow Door and Visual Arts Centre Readings, and the co-founder of Lovers and Others. She is also the recipient of the QWF 2010 Community Award.

MARGO SWISS

Light Delivery

*for Dr. Melanie Caetano
(Obstetrics & Gynaecology)*

Pregnant with worry these many months
I've grown gut-heavy with gloom
though friends have prayed
nay-sayed with conviction
all shall be well.

And to meet at last this brave slip of a girl
who, welcomes first, then hands me over
inside and out with her true-touch fingering!
How cheerfully
she probes away my morning dark, invites
instead
this tongue-tied heart to bear down and express
its full-term delivery of grief.

I marvel in the light
of her expert articulation of this quick benediction
summoning, with such ease, tears of simple joy
from these bone-dry eyes.

Outside after
high over everything I see
that rain has cleared
that sun, drawing back curtains of cloud,
has finally broken through
swabbing streets clean
awash in noonday light.

Margo Swiss has published poems in Quarry, Fiddlehead, Antigonish Review, and several Canadian anthologies. Her monograph, Crossword: A Woman's Narrative, and anthology, Poetry as Liturgy: An Anthology of Canadian Poets, were published in the St. Thomas Poetry Series. She has a recent chapbook, Here Now (Arkward Press), and her work will appear in a forthcoming anthology, The Poet's Quest for God, published in England and edited by Todd Swift. She teaches English and Creative Writing at York University, and tutors in the Writing Department.