

SHEILA STEWART

A Fugue on the World

*The world is not an object
such that I have
in my possession the law
of its making.*

—Maurice Merleau-Ponty

The world is a
(not) object — a table, a street,
a classroom. Yes, table,
street, class

room making — not possessing
the law. My tenuous
relationship with the text

book. (History
with author /ity.)

I sit midlife, clear

some papers to place my palm
mid-desk, my mother's desk.
I remember her taking the front panel

to be re-stained.
My mother's mid-
back. Her sway-

back. *You could rest a tea-cup on the
small of my back*, my mother said. The
world is a knot-poem saying:

World, you are holding

too tight, be
holding.
Or is it me?

*Sheila Stewart's poetry appears earlier in
this volume.*

JUNE STEVENSON

Silhouette on the Snow

Her silhouette cavorts on the new fallen snow,
Elegant, hat and sweeping coat,
A lone figure, gray and white.
Beside me the shadow moves,
Long and lean and lonely.
Are those diamonds in this Christmas snowfall,
Sparkling, twinkling, or are they the tears
That run cold and crisp down my cheek
As the long, lone figure strides with me,
A comfort in the night, silent, sympathetic?
Together we drift into the snowflakes,
Away from the cozy fire of friends and family turned
strangers,
Their lives intact, untouched,
Their smiles reflecting the frost of uncertainty
And inability to deal with the broken wing,
The once in-law, now outlaw,
She who goes with me into the swirling wind,
Footfall after footfall, soft crunches
Muffled by the mounting depth.
Point the boots in the direction of home,
Empty apartment, no more hearth and mistletoe
Or presents by the tree.
Just the cats and me
And the ghosts of Christmas past.
Misfits, stray pieces of a puzzle now discarded,
The shadow shortens in the streetlight
Now fat and dumpy, more like I feel.
Then in the burst of opaque light, suddenly gone,
Flattened like the snow beneath my trudging feet
That push reluctantly forward, dawdling like a child;
Out of the light my companion recedes into the background
Dodging my footsteps.
I turn, she dodges back, cat and mouse.
Let her go that elegant lady with the hat and sweeping coat
She is me who was and is no more.

L. June Stevenson (the L. is for Lorna but she goes by June) is an award-winning writer and editor now retired. For 24 years she edited a publication with The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Her many greeting card verses, poems, articles and daily devotionals have been published internationally in both denominational and secular sources.