

## ILONA MARTONFI

### Irises in Fire

35 rue Lépine,  
Saint-Calixte  
Lanaudière

wild raspberries  
an oak tree  
red trillium  
meadow grass  
irises in fire —  
blue sky  
sound of bullfrogs

wood cabin  
under the pines  
*cerises sauvages*  
choke cherries,  
cement steps remain  
land 100 by 200 feet  
ten minutes from the village  
that day in October,  
six houses burned down,  
gravel road  
Lac des Artistes

remember,

a man beats his wife,

children haul  
spring water

running from the mountain

by a boulder  
raccoons

sifting through rubble and ashes

acrid smell of timber —

*Ilona Martonfi is the author of two poetry books, Blue Poppy (Coracle Press, 2009) and Black Grass, (Broken Rules Press, 2012). She is producer of the Yellow Door & Visual Arts Centre Readings, co-founder of Lovers & Others and winner of a QWF 2010 Community Award.*

## LAURA MCLAUHLAN

### So We Try Again

For a long time we talk about men:  
"I have met Leonard Cohen," says D.,  
who calls, with a drink, late at night  
". . . a small man until he speaks."  
She says that the out of print Norman Levine  
was a sad man with a *very* sick wife." He wrote  
*Canada Made Me* and then lived in England  
writing while his family (near) starved.

My white gloves are well trimmed with black  
I soak them attempting to wash off the dirt  
with sloughed skin. My own  
stories escape and run  
Yarmouth Road.

How I love/hate the grief  
that I keep.

In this dark we seem  
braided in dream  
where our stories turn to fine ash and  
buried bone. We need hope

so we try again

we sit with spring rumoured  
inside fragrant steam. We are two women  
leaning into a table for coffee  
and whatever our own words can do. Speaking  
now  
of ourselves, we laugh drawing our breath.  
Your eyes catch mine. You speak as a sister

of that other country  
you forbid me to name in this poem.

*For two decades Laura McLaughlan worked as a sessional instructor in the English Department at York University. She is currently writing a murder mystery set on the South Shore of Nova Scotia.*