

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 MCLAUCHLAN

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 McLauchlan 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.