

are made from toilet paper rolls and felt to make a resounding “#MeToo” call-to-arms.

But it’s not all about playing dress-up; there are also office supplies for the career woman like a pizza-shaped reusable lunch bag, a sarcastic “Male Chauvinist Tears”-painted coffee mug, and a sassy business card case made from a gutted girl band’s cassette tape, held together with tape and magnets, so you can network in style. You can embrace your inner domestic goddess and *découpage* anti-diet “Food For Thought” dinnerware with Mod Podge or cut-and-paste cocktail-sipping Flappers onto a “Drinking Dames Flask.” You can even wear your heart on your sleeve with girl-scout inspired “Feminist Badges of Hono[u]r” that proclaim your politics, statements like “Girls Rule,” “Riots Not Diets,” or a cute embroidered fish awkwardly straddling a bike depicting the adage that a woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle.

The book revives ‘zine culture and the tactile pleasure of making something from scratch. I do have one caveat, however: While there are no knitting patterns, there are a lot of projects involving an embroidery (or “Em-broad-ery”) hoop, which are a little too advanced for the novice crafter. Burton makes up for it by offering a feminist primer, listing key texts in the second wave and the present “Craftivism” movement by the likes of Betty Friedan and bell hooks. The point is to have a good time while standing up for what you believe in; it’s edutainment. Badger also offers tips on hosting girls’ night crafting parties: riot-grrrl-inspired playlists, party themes from baby showers to fund-raisers, planning the “perfect crafternoon” or holding a chick-flick movie marathon.

Avant-garde feminism doesn’t have to be to the barricades or in yer face to be effective.

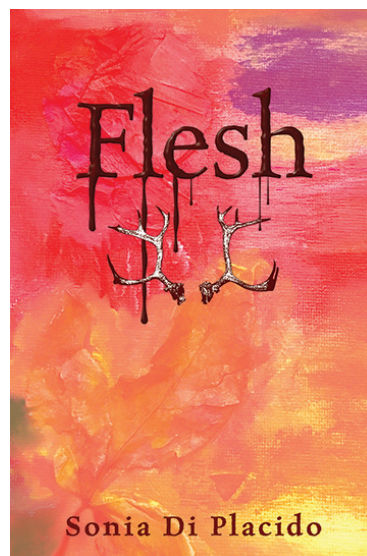
The personal is political, and it can be fun, too.

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FLESH

Sonia Di Placido
Toronto: Guernica Editions, 2018

REVIEWED BY KATE ROGERS



At its best, poet Sonia Di Placido’s *Flesh* is visceral. Associations tumble loose like the innards of a gutted animal. That’s appropriate with references to hunting in northern Ontario, and especially, taxidermy. The poetry collection is literally and figuratively raw in places—with sections at the beginning entitled “Field Notes from a Taxidermist’s Daughter” and “Recipes.” The latter section features many recipes for cooking game including Moose, Deer, Elk and Wild Turkey. Ironically, however, there are more

felt and visceral poems in other sections of the book, particularly in the sections “Friends” and “The Moon and Her Friends.”

The first poem in the first section, “Field Notes from a Taxidermist’s Daughter” is “What is Animal Memorabilia?” It is felt and humorous. It begins with the amusing, macabre lines, “I remember ducks in the dryer.” The narrator goes on in her reverie to “remember the freezer keeping meat—a butcher/stocks his rocks of flesh for the feast.” (She plays) “Persephone hiding/from Hades in abasement.” However, the definition, “What is Taxidermy?” flattens the narrative of that section and the whole collection.

“Tenderise,” the first poem in the “Recipes” section, is also more lyrical and visceral than most of the recipes which follow. “Tenderise” begins with this stanza: “This is what I hear them tell me/from the refrigerator, marinating in milk/’Our dead bodies want to thirst us.” It goes on to declare that “The second coming of milk is pink.” If more associations had been set free in that poem it would have continued to be as interesting.

In the poem “Moose Meat & Pureed Tomato Stew,” also in the “Recipes” section, the description in the fifth stanza is evocative:

A rich tomato moose
bourguignon
...Like precious stones gone soft
the tissue folds, stouter than
beef...
Succulent with sauce, the plush
life
melts in the mouth.

The erasure treatment of “Wild Turkey” is interesting in the Notes section because as the recipe is “reduced,” the brutality of hunting is revealed:

hot water weakens the skin

around the feathers
...the bird has been *shot*. Then
remove the innards. This makes
the process much easier for the
finer feathers are almost like hu-
man hairs around the skin....”

However, many of the recipes seem
like filler and are neither lyrical nor
engaging.

As already mentioned, the best
sections of the book with the most
consistently engaging poems are
“Friends” and “The Moon and Her
Friends.” Many of the poems in
“Friends” are playful, like the first
poem in that section, “Doe,” which
begins:

I am learning to hide
the hairs of this language
by losing [an] other.
I give you words in all my
skins—
moistened, tanned, stained
stamped
leather patent or pleather...”

“Elegy for a Stuffed Duck,” which
begins with a tribute to the parts of a
feather, is a playful and witty riff on
birds. It is one of the strongest poems
in the collection, beginning with:

O Calamus! Let us follow the
birds
to paradise in the wild range...
turn our backs from the earned
science
of con artist structures and
vehicle
cement
to the call of faraway climes.

It continues in strong form in the
fourth stanza:

Oh mallards, O ring necks, O
wood
ducks! We survey
snivel for a closer listen to your
clarinet sighs, aim to

silence your swank saxophone
quack...”

Also in the “Friends” section,
“Nesting with the Sparrow” is an-
other strong poem. It evokes the
narrator’s connection to that bird at
a visceral level:

In the long-ago shadows of
our past
I was beneath your ribs, eating
foliage
...I was the gorge between
your legs, waiting for the
collide of
water and womb:
...I long to return to you....
enter the dark world of your
Mouth—broken
beaked, beaten, breathing.

On page 60 is “Whale Revenge”
with “lapping, shiny smooth skin,
a rubbery roof—...shouts//hooved
sounds,/wailing water-wish/from
whalebones.” It is among the most
evocative poems in the book.

As a writer long based in Asia, I
found the first of the two poems set
there gave in to cliché and predictable
tropes of China. In the first stanza
of “Red Colossus after Sylvia Plath”
there are “Tiger prowls”...”Pig-
grunts”, and a “Monkey-King,” “All
of it hushed by great lotus lips and
a /monk’s moon.” The following
poem, “Who Dares to Encounter
the Dragonfly of Binhai,” is more
original in both its setting and the
questions it asks: “...you continue to
seek out/weeping willows for a gentle
hook into the sway of breeze” the
narrator observes, then asks, “Have
you circled yourself enough today?”

In the final section of the book,
“The Moon and Her Friends”, we
meet a vulnerable and engaging
narrator in “Moon Madness” who
takes “moon-shaped medicine.../
to make more serotonin for moon-
white.” More poems like this and

those which play with language and
association and fewer recipes would
have made *Flesh* a stronger collection
of poetry, but there is much to enjoy
within its pages.

*Kate Rogers’ poetry has been shortlisted
for the 2018 Vancouver Tagore Society
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national Poetry Prize. Kate has poetry
forthcoming in Tamaracks: Canadian
Poetry for the 21st Century; Algebra
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Baptist University, Chinese University,
and Cha: An Asian Literary Journal.
Kate Rogers’ latest poetry collection is
Out of Place (Quattro-Aeolus House,
Toronto. 2017).*

A SEASON AMONG PSYCHICS

Elizabeth Greene
Toronto: Inanna Publications and
Education, 2018.

REVIEWED BY KATE ROGERS

In its first sentence, the novel *A Season
Among Psychics* entices the reader
with empathy, wit, and anticipation:
“When I was fifty and thought my life
was over, I let my best friend, Claire,
persuade me to attend a psychic fair.”

Elizabeth Greene’s dedication at
the beginning of the book also drew
me in: “For the teachers,” it states. If
any group of professionals deserves
such recognition, teachers at all levels