

SUSAN MCCASLIN

Sturgeon Visitations

1.

Floating in a red canoe
on a tributary of the Fraser

night mooning, moon drifting
we are terrifically jolted

by sudden roiling waves
below us, ancient stirrings

Dragon sine curves?
"Ogo Pogo?" we chitter

What just passed?

Later we discover
Sturgeon bides here

whose ancestors emerged
sixty-five million years ago

waterway scanners
deep dreamers

trolling by scent
soft-mouthed biters

of molluscs, crustaceans
some up to eleven feet long

some one thousand pounds
White Sturgeon's

foreshortened home still
these Fraser waterways

2.

What suffers in you in us?
Your armour-scales unavailing

against pesticides, gravel mining
diking, dredging, urban sprawl

catch-and-release fishing, poaching
our appetite for the delicacy of your eggs

You are both Jonah and ark
in your own vast body

Your juveniles
not reaching maturity

Ancient of Days swims
in a humanoid dungeon

Without you, we are diminished
blinded to your calm dark

Is the eye through which we see you
the eye through which you see us?

Clouded, darkened
unknowingly inter-specied?

We are won and lost
in your troubled equanimity

slow time of your motions
still alive in our poisoned streams

Susan McCaslin is a Canadian poet living in Fort Langley, BC who has published fifteen volumes of poetry, including her most recent, Into the Open: Poems New and Selected (Inanna, 2017). She has recently collaborated with J.S. Porter on a volume of creative non-fiction, Superabundantly Alive: Thomas Merton's Dance with the Feminine (Wood Lake, 2018). Susan can be found wandering along the Fraser with her dog Rosie in the presence of Douglas firs, hemlocks, and cedars.