

how this under-representation affects her, as a woman, or what some suitable feminist responses might be, Ching instead implies that the problem is too big to be dealt with, and one is better served by not dwelling on it too long.

Another drawback with this text is the excessive detail. Even though some detail is important to explicate Ching's experiences, the narrative tends to overwhelm the reader with information which seems superfluous. Do we really need to know what style of clothing people wore when they came to visit her in the hospital?

Despite these difficulties, *The Butterfly Healing* is a valuable account. Through telling her own story, Ching encourages all of us to consider our multiple influences and identities. As a cosmopolitan Chinese Catholic woman, now living and teaching in Canada, Ching must blend her many identities. This sometimes results in confusion and inconsistency, but these inconsistencies are neither positive nor negative. Ching has the choice of resisting them or embracing them, of fighting them or using them to enhance her life. In her search for healing and wholeness, she chooses to embrace all aspects of her identity. This makes her life much more difficult to pigeon-hole into the stereotypical definitions of what is Eastern or what is Western, what is Catholic or what is Taoist, what is academic, what is mother, what is wife, what is woman. This is what makes her life so interesting and even inspirational.

REMYTH

Kathy Fretwell. Windsor: Cranberry Tree, 1997.

BY BERYL BAIGENT

A strikingly attractive book produced by a small press, which does its utmost to combine essence and receptacle. What better way to accomplish this than to use the poet's own art work, which unfolds onto both sides

of the cover. Fretwell's watercolour *Old World Swallowtail* opens the reader to a soul journey as experienced by this poet whose life (she tells us in her Introduction) has been one of conflict and searching: "Reared a Presbyterian, baptized an adult Roman Catholic, [she has] been indoctrinated from many angles." Not finding her image in the male trinity, and understanding why, after recovering memories in 1990 of sexual abuse by her father, Fretwell proclaims the Great Mother in whom she is discovering her "higher self."

A "Prologue" pre-empts the psychic search with a suggestion that it will touch "all seven continents," as, like Ponce de Leon, she searches for the fountain—though not of youth, but of self-sustenance and peace. The poet hopes that all women will "slowly ... unfurl / out of burning times a new leaf."

Section 1, "Seeking my feminine," invokes "geese mothers" (Mother Geese) like "Lindsay Wagner," "Lilith," "Jeanne D'Arc," and others. She is one of them, with her rebellious "fledgling daughter," and previously, a "stay-at-home mother, / perennially plastered, / forced to shelve her law degree, [who] raised [her] to be a Fury." "Fury" is the ambiance cultivated in these defiant and thorny poems.

"Reviewing the whole shebang" Section 2, is the longest section with fifteen poems, beginning with the question "Am I what I digest?" A savvy and well-read writer, with an MSW and "most of" an honours English degree, Fretwell knows the signs and sorrows of abuse, just as she knows literary devices and how to effectively dislocate a cliché. She "tank[s] up on the Big Four / counting Cool Whip / an edible oil spill." She is the "prodigal daughter weaned off / smoke and firewater," writing seven (the number of spirituality) pieces which "revisit" legends and fairy tales of childhood in order to make them relevant to today's women. She addresses prose poems to the Forest witch whose "tale is

grim" and the battered children symbolized by Hansel and Gretel; to Cinderella's fairy godmother whose "magic serves the status quo"; to Red-Riding Hood's wolf-grandmother who is likened to other "rogues [who] devour women wholehog to be one with our bodies"; and to the Ugly Duckling who symbolizes the rejected Down's syndrome child.

According to Jung, denying the father (either physically or spiritually) makes one search for the Mother. On her spiritual travels, this is Fretwell's experience. But as Section 2 concludes with blessings to her Crone and Matron-Hood and moves into "Mothering my mother-tongue," the poet declares her freedom from women (as well as men) whose lives have been diminished by patriarchy. She is ready to "climb / Risk / Write." And although her journey continues through "flattened beercans" and "plans / to four-lane" a trillium-blushed wooded path, she sees "an Eastern Tiger Swallowtail" butterfly and is reminded to acknowledge the dark and the light on her psych(e)ic journey.

Fretwell's final words in the Epilogue remind the uninitiated that goddess belief and worship is "Not a fable." In fact, the final poem "Acropolis" offers graphic evidence of the worship of Athena Nike, a place where "Her spirit still / breathes in clouds, thunders on ground." The author is echoing one of her mentors, Riane Eisler, by suggesting that by re-visioning cultural underpinnings, western civilization may be transformed into a dynamic egalitarian society in which all may achieve spiritual potential.

This book can be perused poem by poem by all who wish to relate to the exploitation and domination of five thousand years of patriarchy. It can also be read as an on-going spiritual journey which begins with the need for external validation in the presence of a transcendent deity, and moves towards self-assurance and immanence.