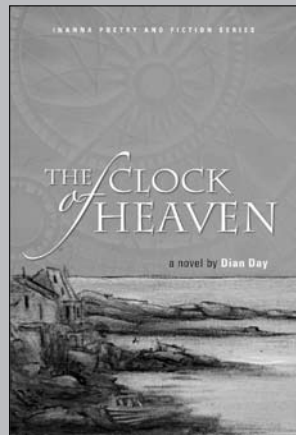


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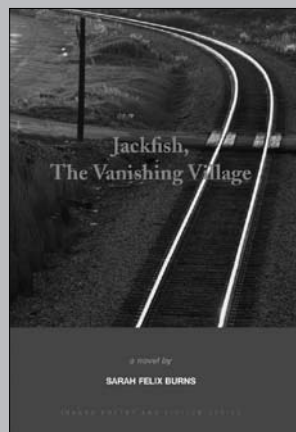
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CATHERINE BURWELL

august

i
a dead stiff heat
streets the edge
of the city,
slows the motion
of children/ mothers/
dogs

walking to a
friend's house,
coffee & cakes at
the edge of a freeway,
even cars
pass the afternoon
without energy

ii
three blocks east
& down a house
is demolished

*here since the war years
her father built it*

neighbours trade stories
watch the metal claw
scrape each wall
delicately away,
choke softly
on diesel
as dust

bursts/ & settles
bursts/ & settles

iii
she unlocks
the door
& blurred words

stir the air
behind her
a body on
a couch
encounters
cracks in
the ceiling

counts the ways

to say over
& over again

*it's the heat, though she's been
losing faith all summer,
memory just a slow drift called
water*

in a corner
fans whirl,
purr the lost
hope of open
windows
& a better street

iv
the boats still
aren't clean
the boss says
so you and
the other guy
we're only muscle to him
haul garbage
scrub floors
wash sails till
6 pm,
backs bare to
the shouting sun,
mouths shut

come dark,
sleep and food will
weigh you down
but at midnight
i watch as
your muscles
shudder & twist,
& you curse softly
at the day

Catherine Burwell is an English teacher with the Toronto District School Board and a doctoral candidate at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. Her poems have been published in Room of One's Own, Arc, Dandelion, Pottersfield Portfolio and CV2.