

of scholarship on Dionne Brand, Claire Harris and M. Nourbese Philip. He argues that critics “either reduce the writers to the status of sociologists or they bleach their work of aesthetic value. The resultant criticism is tedious, inadequate, and—perhaps—insidious” (164). While I don’t agree that we can neatly address the aesthetics of a writer like Brand without also discussing her politics, I also take his point that to address only politics with no attention to aesthetics would be just as misguided. I also agree that, when reading this work, critics “must engage their poetics, their structures, styles, influences; the histories of their textual productions, receptions and circulations” (179).

<sup>4</sup>For more on the relationship between history, memory and the body in Brand’s work, see Michael Bucknor and Jody Mason. Mason’s reading of the ambivalence of the history of the body and of the importance of the “felt presence of history” (787) is particularly appropriate to my reading of *Inventory*.

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## SHEILA STEWART

### Remembrance

In the middle of yoga the teacher interrupts *downward dog* for a few minutes of seated silence: the whole library on hold.

We’re in the basement. I prefer yoga’s own stillness. My friend leaving a lifetime teaching to write poetry – her last Remembrance Day

assembly. Final time leading a row of children into the auditorium. The principal talks peace but makes them stand still enough to be filled

with Flanders Fields. (I was good at standing still, readying myself for something.)

My friend tells me of Nathan who screams in class as if a bayonet pierces his side.

She says to the children, *Have you ever been hurt? I have*. She lets them see her cry. The statue in the park tell us courage is a man on horseback.

Grandfather, returned from the war, beat Gran. (My uncle told my brother told me.) For the woman in the far corner, coming to yoga class is an act of courage.

Leaving her room, combat. Stillness on any ordinary day, an act of remembering and not. Letting your spine fall into the ground.

*Sheila Stewart’s first poetry collection, A Hat to Stop a Train, was published by Wolsak and Wynn in 2003. She won the Dan Sullivan Poetry Contest in 2006, the Scarborough Art Council’s Windows on Words Annual Poetry Contest in 2003 and the Potterfield Portfolio Short Poem Competition in 2000. Her poetry has appeared in such journals as The Antigoni Review, Canadian Woman Studies, Descant, Fireweed, The Malahat Review and Tessera.*