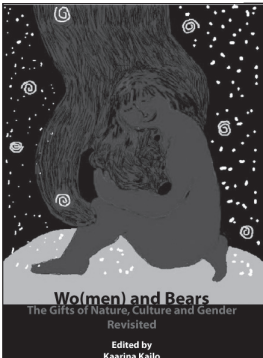


LISA SHATZKY

The Poet Is Not Here

I am not the one who writes these words. The poet is not here. Really.
She's out, digging a hole somewhere or maybe playing in the mud again
while I'm here making sandwiches, answering the phone and feeding the cat.
You have mistaken me for her. She is my Other. No, it's not Multiple Personality
Disorder, because I know she exists and besides, I don't have mysterious bank accounts
in different names in different parts of the city. No, not an alter-ego, because she really
doesn't stick around any longer than she has to so we have very little contact. No, she's
not my double, I mean, there's only one physical body here, not two, and we're sharing it,
I think. My Other is the one responsible for the words, not me. I'm not her keeper so
don't keep asking where she is when she's not here. I have no clue of her whereabouts,
though quite frankly, I'm relieved when she leaves. It gives me a chance to catch up on
things, like pay bills and clean the bathroom. You have to understand, when she's
around, she takes over. There's no room for anyone else. She arrives unannounced,
cancels plans I've made, ignores anything that even remotely resembles a schedule, loses
the car keys, doesn't return messages, drinks copious amounts of coffee, and burns
whatever's on the oven. Even the children stay away.
Come in, if you like. I can put the tea on and we'll chat for a while.
But don't expect the poet to show up any time soon.
She has a way of disappearing
when the questions come
and she leaves all
the explaining
to me.

Lisa Shatzky's poetry has been described as "provocative verse that awakens the soul..." (Sandstar Publications, U.S., 2001) and has been published in chapbooks, anthologies, journals, magazines, and newspapers across Canada and the U.S. Several poems were placed as winners in national poetry competitions in 2003 and 2004 and have since been published in books. Most recently, Shatzky's poetry has been published in Quills Canadian Poetry Magazine (Summer 2006). Shatzky's first poetry book, Wandering in Yesterday's Rain (First Choice Books, 2005), has been widely sold in British Columbia through independent bookstores, literary and cultural events, and poetry readings across the province. When not writing, Lisa Shatzky works as a psychotherapist on Bowen Island, British Columbia, where she lives with her husband, three children, and an assortment of animals. She is currently working on a second poetry collection.

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