

canopy of the bed, lying down and reading. Next to me, is a skeleton that is reaching down to Frida. This skeleton presents the “Judas figure” that was exploded at Easter time in Mexico and it is a symbol of suicide (Kettenmann). I see it as a symbol of death and the lines of life with chronic pain and immobility as blurred—death waits around the corner. After completing these two pieces, I learned I had breast cancer.

Premonitions. The artery link between Frida and I in my painting *Me and Frida Kahlo* reminds me of the PICC line that I now have implanted in my right arm to deliver chemotherapy. The plastic line goes up inside my arm and into a main artery of my heart. As for *My Will Remains*, this is a partial quote from Frida Kahlo who wrote, “My will is great. My will remains” (qtd. in Herrera 226). I continue to work lying down, and chemo is almost finished. My prognosis is good—but I must do six weeks of radiation yet. Indeed, my will remains.

Diane Driedger is a Ph.D. candidate in Education at the University of Manitoba. Her art has appeared in group exhibitions in Winnipeg and Port of Spain, Trinidad. Her latest book, Dissonant Disabilities: Women with Chronic Illnesses Theorize Their Lives, co-edited with Michelle Owen, will be published by Women's Press in 2007.

References

- Driedger, D., ed. *From Hibernation to Liberation: Women with Disabilities Speak Out*. Port of Spain: Disabled Women's Network of Trinidad and Tobago, 1999.
- Herrera, H. *Frida Kahlo: The Paintings*. New York: HarperCollins, 1993.
- Kettenmann, A. *Frida Kahlo 1907-1954: Pain and Passion*. Koln: Taschen, 2000.
- Teilhard de Chardin, P. *The Future of Man*. London: Collins, 1964.
- Utatnaq, A., ed. *The Sound of Songs: Stories by Baker Lake*

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 published in chapbooks, anthologies, journals, magazines, and newspapers across Canada and the U.S. Most recently, Shatzky's poetry has been published in Quills Canadian Poetry Magazine and Cahoot. Her first poetry book, Wandering in Yesterday's Rain was published in 2005. When not writing, Lisa Shatzky works as a psychotherapist on Bowen Island, BC, where she lives with her husband, three children, and an assortment of animals.