

chapbooks incorporate exquisite paper, handsome endpapers, and interesting design elements, such as tipped-in photographs, original linocuts or folded paper, to make these limited editions distinctive and collector's items. {M}Other Tongue Press uses the raised stamp "Beautiful books make the heart sing" both as its logo and its motto and describes itself as "a private press specializing in beautiful limited signed editions of poetry, letterpress work, and book art." I could not agree more both with the singing heart and the description.

Each of these authors has contributed poetry to *Canadian Woman Studies*. Cathy Ford, the most seasoned of the feminist poets represented here, has previously published ten books of poetry. Part of *Cunnilingus, or How I Learned to Love Figure Skating* was performed at the "Second Annual Salt Spring Erotic Literary Evening" on Salt Spring Island in 1996. The work is a stream of consciousness ode to the sensuous body and mind using a creative compression of words to evoke young love, adult love, passion, sexual ecstasy, and the tensions of love. The poet skates in the heavens with "skin cold as ice" among "bodies that left me cold" with poems which sing with the rhythms of music. Using startling images such as "if you stick your tongue to a skate blade it will freeze in place" and rich, lush language such as "in the frosted glass greenhouse conservatory of our past life memory," this poetry mesmerized me into a language-induced trance, from which I had to shake myself at the end of the book. It is rare that writing of any kind can draw us completely out of ourselves and into the world of the writer. Cathy Ford is such a powerful writer.

Susan McCaslin won the first prize in the Third Annual Poetry Chapbook Contest for these poems, *Letters to William Blake*, and I can see why: they are original, cheeky, "with it," from the heart letters of a poet to her muse. In the days of TV reruns, Starbucks coffee, teaching as a "marketable skill," and doing the laundry,

she says "Ah, Sunflower! I cling to your roots while dangling over the abyss." She also argues with Blake about his views on females, wonders about innocence and religion, congratulates him on Glad Day yet brilliantly brings it all back to Port Moody, clear-cuts, and her life as a poet, mother, and teacher.

Kate Braid won second prize in the Third Annual Poetry Chapbook Contest for *A Woman's Fingerprint* (Georgia O'Keefe Meets Emily Carr), drawn from O'Keefe's fictional journal of a trip she and Carr might have taken in 1930, in both New Mexico and British Columbia. Although inventive in concept and execution, if you know the work of the two artists and have seen the connection in their painting styles, words (even poetry) seem one dimensional in comparison to the painted canvases. Neither the language nor the scenarios convinced me of a true connection between O'Keefe and Carr.

If you love imaginative language and beautiful book-making, you will enjoy these engaging chapbooks, full of original thoughts, reflecting the lives of women. Cathy Ford's *Cunnilingus, or How I Learned to Love Figure Skating* gets the closest to the sensation of deeply felt and perfectly conveyed emotions. *Letters to William Blake* is fun and contemporary while *A Woman's Fingerprint* is an interesting intellectual exercise.

#### LE DOT DE SARA

Marie-Célie Agnant. Montréal: Editions du Remue-ménage, 1998.

#### PAR MONIQUE ROY

Née en Haïti, Marie-Célie Agnant vit à Montréal depuis 25 ans où elle travaille comme interprète culturelle auprès des communautés haïtiennes et latino-américaines. C'est dans le cadre d'une recherche sociologique sur les grands-mères haïtiennes de Montréal qu'elle a écrit ce premier roman, hommage aux « survivantes ... » de son pays d'origine. Dans une langue sobre et accessible, l'auteure

met en scène quatre générations de femmes, qui, avec la même passion déterminée, souhaitent « pour nos enfants une part de ce que la vie nous avait refusé... ».

Sa mère étant morte à sa naissance, Marianne est recueillie par sa grand-mère Aida qui lui transmet ses valeurs: fierté, honnêteté, courage, indépendance. La fillette retient les leçons et quand, à 17 ans, elle met au monde une fille—dont le père s'est éclipcé—elle décidera de l'élever seule en s'esquintant sur une vieille machine à coudre Singer pour lui payer des études. Giselle quittera Anse-aux-Mombins pour « ... la vie qui se vit ailleurs ... ».

Pendant vingt ans, les trois femmes vont vivre ensemble, à Montréal, où Marianna, tout en s'adaptant tant bien que mal à l'hiver trop long, au métro qui l'effraie, au café qui ne goûte rien, à l'autorité familiale relâchée, va créer un lien précieux avec sa petite-fille à qui elle lègue l'héritage de son aïeule Aida.

« J'écrirai ton histoire, elle ne finira jamais, elle sera éternelle, belle et éternelle », promet Sara à Marianna, quand cette dernière repartira dans son pays « retrouver ce parfum de campagne ... cette odeur de canne brûlée ... » et, sur la galerie de sa vieille maison, attendre Sara.

#### A SOCIAL HISTORY OF WET NURSING IN AMERICA: FROM BREAST TO BOTTLE

Janet Golden. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

#### BY KRISTA SCOTT

The role and function of the female breast has been a subject of intense discussion and fantasy in western history, since stories of the breast are entwined with debates about mothering, sexuality, and the place of women. Carolus Linnaeus, the eighteenth-century originator of modern zoological nomenclature, decided that