

7-29-2014

Expanding the Circle: New Poets to The Goose

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Recommended Citation

L'Abbé, Sonnet (2014) "Expanding the Circle: New Poets to The Goose," *The Goose*: Vol. 13: Iss. 1, Article 13.

Available at: <http://scholars.wlu.ca/thegoose/vol13/iss1/13>

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Sonnet L'Abbé

Expanding the Circle: New Poets to *The Goose*

When I agreed to serve as *The Goose's* first guest poetry editor, Lisa and Paul asked me to introduce some voices to the nature writing conversation who may not be known for explicit environmentalism or a focus on "nature." I found this an exciting assignment, as many writers better known for interests in experimentalism, social power relations, the experience of urban living, class activism, or art as social change do work that challenges dominant modes of "nature appreciation" in complex, critical, and insightful ways.

In most cases, I approached poets whose work I knew, and simply asked if they had any poems that might speak to *The Goose's* readership. In other cases, I came across recent work in journals or new books that I thought approached ecopoetry in a new way or hit a different note in bringing the reader to an appreciation of the non-human world. I have curated with diversity of voice, an important biodiversity, in mind.

Jordan Abel's found poem, which cobbles together examples of the words "wild life" in their "original habitats," recontextualizes the phrase to explore what Western thought locates at the edges of "civilization": fauna in their habitat, unrestrained human sexuality, aboriginal homelands, and an ideal of authenticity. **Kathleen Brown** suggests vocalization as a kind of bodily sonar-ization, an echolocation; her poem drew me into fish-being; I imagined the reverb of gills. **Julie Joosten's** poems are reprinted from her first book, *Light Light*, and take up a subject dear to my heart: the Romantic poets' interest in cognitive similarities of plant being and human being. **Cecily Nicholson** poses "nation" as a verb, as a psychological and physical act of culturing forms of land and body. **Linda Russo**, the only American poet in this issue, uses the article "an" with long chains of language to make us rethink the particulate, and imagine the scale perception of floating particles.

Souvankham Thammavongsa is a miniaturist who gives us a tiny reimagination of geographic orientation and a tiny interaction with a fast-moving plant. **Brian Antoine**, **Lenaya Sampson**, **Vicky Raphael**, **Lindsay Oppenheimer**, **Yetko Brooke Bearshirt-Robins**, and **John (Wilke) Louis** are student writers and elders from the Okanagan Valley, whose collaborative poems I was thrilled to discover in two wonderfully produced booklets that arrived, free and unanticipated, in my mailbox in Kelowna, B.C. Their writing speaks powerfully to experiences of survival off/on a particular land.

I'm very proud to introduce these writers to you, and encourage you to seek out more of their work.

SONNET L'ABBÉ, Ph.D., is the author of two collections of poetry, *A Strange Relief* and *Killarnoe*, both published by McClelland & Stewart. She was the *2017StartsNow!* Artist-in-Motion in 2013 and is the 2014 guest editor of *Best Canadian Poetry*. She is now at work on *Sentient Mental Flower Book* and *Sonnet's Shakespeare*, her third and fourth collections of poems. L'Abbé has taught at the University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies and at the University of British Columbia, and in 2015 will be the Edna Staebler Writer-In-Residence at Wilfrid Laurier University.