

Selection from

The Angel of Duluth: Prose Poems
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Founded in 1996 by Robert Alexander, the Marie Alexander Poetry Series is dedicated to promoting the appreciation, enjoyment, and understanding of American prose poetry. An imprint of White Pine Press since 2001, the Series publishes one to two books annually. It is our mission to publish the very best contemporary prose poetry and to carry the rich tradition of this hybrid form on into the 21st century.

Necrophilia

In this movie a woman is in love with the body of death. She wants to smell, touch, taste it. She wants to puncture it, caressing the internal organs, watching the exchange of chemicals with blood. If she sings, dances, has sex with it, she will feel its whole history of hurt or joy. For such a thrill, she is willing to do anything. But this is fiction. Tonight, in Sally's kitchen, I hear a woman describe how she entered her mother's bedroom moments after her death. How the air in there was like mica, thin and flashing. Yet how warm and supple her mother's flesh. How she washed her, changed her nightgown, combed her hair. How she inhaled then, deeply and slowly. Taking into her lungs all the cutting edges of her life.

The Franklin Avenue Bridge

If I walk down to the river, on a near-freezing, near-thawing January day. If I walk close to sunset, with the river white and rigid at the edges, at the center black and flowing. If I walk through the hard and the slushy stuff, sometimes gripping, sometimes sliding. If I see three small boys coming home from school, their coats flapping open. If I nearly crash into one careening down a homemade toboggan run on his front lawn. If I cross the Franklin Ave. bridge, with the moon at my back like a premonition, the sky before a pulsing, radiant orange. If I stop, transfixed by all that is passing, racing or glowing. How will I know (if I love the light at this moment) who holds me (as much as the darkness that is to come) in the world's open palm?

You Surprise Yourself

In your fifties, you seem too old for this. For this heaving, buckling, ugly eruption in your life. It's crude and, quite frankly, embarrassing. You feel, in the nakedness of your loss, like Hamlet's mother, caught in some randy act—lifting your legs, your reddened crotch with its thinning hairs, for the whole world to snigger at. Yet, in the full, grunting, expression of your grief, you no longer care how you look. Instead, everything you have ever wanted to hide comes pouring out—like some ancient burst water main—full of floating particles and rust.

From *Lake*, part 6

I walk alone, this time, in another season. I can tell by the colors. Not gray and green as in the spring, overcast and rainy—nor brazen and effulgently blue, as in the summer with its flashes of white-hot brilliance. Cerulean rather and copper-gold—as in oak leaves littering the ground, the sky as smooth and calm as the lake. Which hardly ripples—yet oscillates, so you know there’s something alive and moving just below the surface. The geese cry early now, as they stretch their wings for the long flight away from here. And the smells along the path of decay—like small, yellow-red crabapples blending sweetishly into the earth.