

2010 - 2020



# Live encounters

BOOKS - REVIEWS

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COVER ARTWORK BY IRISH ARTIST EMMA BARONE





Photograph by Mark Ulyseas.



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Live Encounters is a not-for-profit free online magazine that was founded in 2009 in Bali, Indonesia. It showcases some of the best writing from around the world. Poets, writers, academics, civil & human/animal rights activists, academics, environmentalists, social workers, photographers and more have contributed their time and knowledge for the benefit of the readers of:

*Live Encounters Magazine* (2010), *Live Encounters Poetry & Writing* (2016), *Live Encounters Young Poets & Writers* (2019) and now, *Live Encounters Books* (August 2020).

We are appealing for donations to pay for the administrative and technical aspects of the publication. **Please help by donating any amount for this just cause as events this year are threatening the very future of Live Encounters.**

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

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## CONTRIBUTORS

It is only in *quietness* that true passion can exist to create life sustaining memories. In the *quietness* of reading books we inhabit memories of other worlds, worlds beyond the doors of *our* Time.

Books are here to guide us on our journey through these doors. And writers and poets are here to create these books for us.

Let us be thankful and buy books to read and share with the world.

– Mark Ulyseas

ALISON ELLIOTT / ANNE M CARSON

DR SOTIRIA KALASARIDOU / ELSA KORNETI

MARIE O'HALLORAN / POLLY RICHARDSON MUNNELLY

JESSICA PENNER / YUYUTSU SHARMA

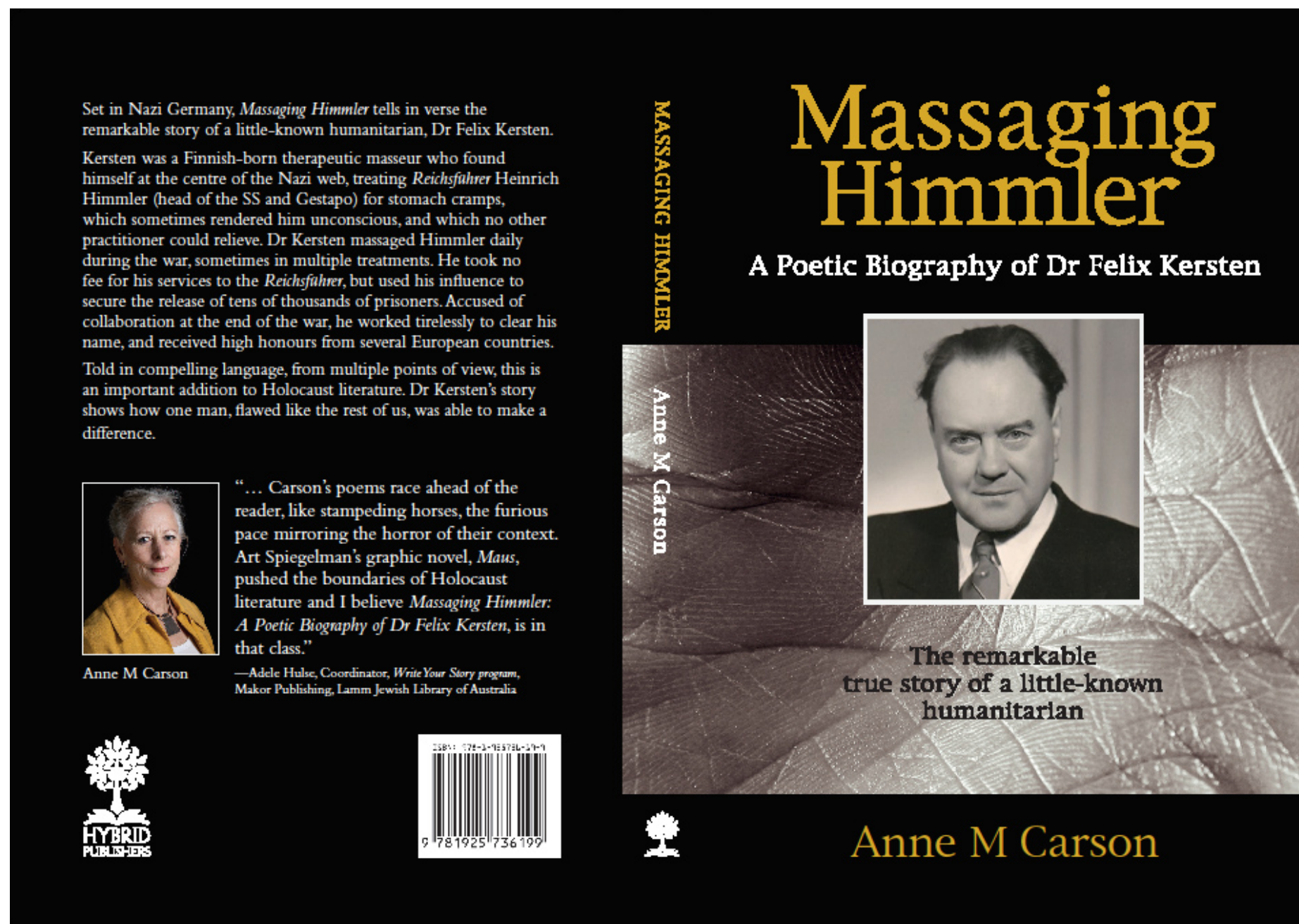




Anne M Carson's poetry has been published internationally, and widely in Australia. Recent publications include *Massaging Himmler: A Poetic Biography of Dr Felix Kersten* (Hybrid, 2019), and *Two Green Parrots* (Ginnindera Press, 2019). She has initiated a number of poetry-led social justice projects. She is currently a PhD candidate at RMIT where her project includes poetic biographies of two creative women – Anna Magdalena Bach, a 'flawless' soprano (according to her husband, Johann Sebastian Bach) and George Sand, prolific French novelist.



As a Taurean, Alison Elliott has always had a love of the physical world. As a physio student she learnt of nerve stimulation, proprioception, muscle trigger points and the value of deep massage therapy. As a Feldenkrais practitioner she learnt about the embodiment of our being, our psyche and how the simple act of movement can reveal us to ourselves. Posture at first appearing as a static state resulting from our anatomy, is rather seen as an active and continual expression of self; and in its active state, amenable to change and learning. Later, learning Bodytalk, a form of kinesiology, she further refined her sensitivities, exploring the subtler energy fields of the world. All of this study was imbued with a moral and spiritual enquiry. What was justice? How should one live to create a just world? How do our socio-political structures live within us and express themselves in our societies? For much of her career she has worked in the public health sector. She is currently a General Manager at a Community Health Service in Victoria.



ALISON ELLIOTT  
Review of ANNE M CARSON'S  
*Massaging Himmler –  
A Poetic Biography of Dr Felix*

<https://www.amazon.com/Massaging-Himmler-Poetic-Biography-Kersten-ebook>

Though we didn't know each other as teenagers, Carson and I shared an intense desire to understand and witness the holocaust. Carson nurtured that enquiry to fruition in *Massaging Himmler: A Poetic Biography of Dr Felix Kersten*, a poetic page-turner, a story of intensity; the reading experience as visceral as the massage at its core.

I came to this story partly as a colleague and friend of Carson, and partly as a body work practitioner – this gives me particular receptivity to the way massage was enacted and manipulated in this story. Using juxtaposition, metaphor, shape and space, Carson has recorded the journey of discipline as Kersten learns to perform his physio-neuro massage. To push forward into tissue, to pause, to breathe, to allow direction to emerge, intensity, timing – to allow release.

Kersten's negotiations with Himmler mirror this massage process; push forward, pause, breathe, balancing direction, intensity and timing, eventually to create the circumstances for the release of thousands of prisoners.

I watched Carson develop her own discipline with the material in the book. One doesn't simply walk into the voice of evil. In order to capture this, one must process its existence; push into it, pause, breathe and allow direction to emerge. This is a visceral read; the embodied self of the reader comes to know the trajectory of evil, the contradictions of humanity and what it takes to find agency and restore balance, through their embodiment on the page, in the poems.

*".....how wearing  
to live under that regime until away, you find your*

*Shoulders drop down and your breath deepen.  
How the body holds tension....."*<sup>1</sup>

Kersten questions his own integrity in the face of Himmler's evil, taken into his hands as his body decides his moral position. Can he adhere to his moral code as a healer, balance his own desires for action and allow a "whole new symphony"<sup>2</sup> to transpire? In the end his hands choose to inflict pain on Himmler, the better to secure releases.

To really understand the knife's edge and precarious balance of Kersten's achievement, one must understand the context of the time. Carson's use of form is a masterstroke. This story unfolds on the page within the margins of history through the use of marginalia – 'tracks' which tightly contain Kersten's story, just as the Nazi train rolls across Europe, seemingly unstoppable.

*"A great deal of talking yet to slow the great heavy  
wheels of war, now they turn with such momentum."*<sup>3</sup>

This is a story of the past and a story for our times; a study of the courage and the discipline it takes to create a better future.

*"If our prayers/ were winged, the sky would throng with thank-birds."*<sup>4</sup>

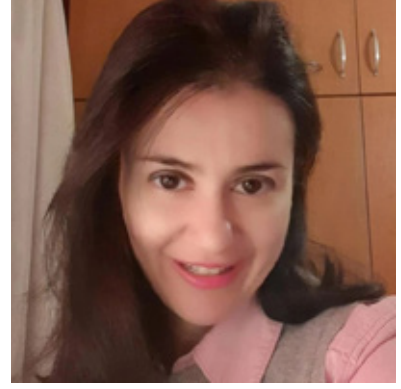
#### End Notes

1. Carson, 2019, 172.
2. Ibid, 16.
3. Ibid, 175.
4. Ibid, 254.

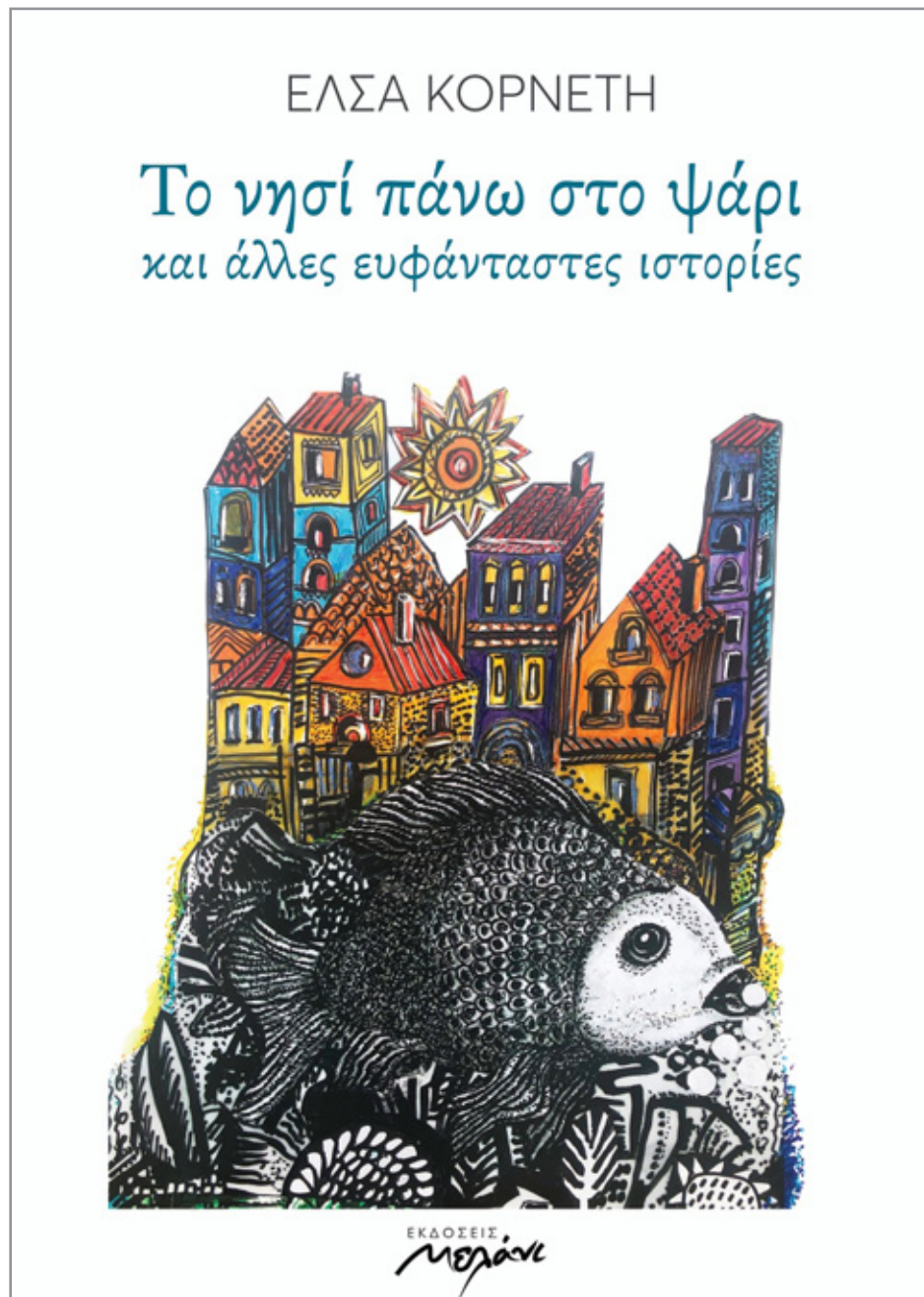




Elsa Korneti (1969) is a poet and essayist. She has published eight books of poetry, two of translations and one of essays, while she has translated from English, German, Italian and Spanish significant poetry works. Two of her poetry collections have been distinguished as shortlisted: *A bouquet of fish bones* (2009) and the *Pearl Tin* (2011) both nominated for the National Award of Poetry. She has been awarded first prize in a national short story competition (Prize Ta Nea) and a significant national prize (Prize George Karter) for a poetry collection under the title *Normal people with a plume and a brindled tail*. What the critics say: "Hers is a personal poetry, it deals with themes universally relevant and does so in a disarmingly sincere and unpretentious way. The dialogue between a critical alter ego and the self reveals whatever false, deceptive and concealed, but also whatever true and valuable there may be in the narrator's experiences. An exciting new voice in contemporary Greek poetry".



Dr. Sotiria Kalasaridou was born in Thessaloniki, Greece. She has studied Philosophy at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and her Master Degree is related to the Pedagogy and Education. She has a Ph.D in Literary Education and essays and articles of her have been published in many academic journals and conference proceedings in Greece and internationally. Her first book (Shekspearicon, 2017) has the title *Literature on the Internet. Mapping and Utilisation in Teaching*. HSince 2013 has published a number of literary reviews in many literary journals. She was a scientific associate at the Center for Greek Language and she has taught as visiting lecturer at various university departments. In 2016 she received Post-doctoral Research fellowship of excellence from A.U.TH. Research Committee and thesis entitled *Literature on the Internet. Mapping and Utilisation in Teaching*. From April 2017 till April 2019 she was post-doctoral research fellow of the State Scholarships Foundation (I.K.Y). Since 10/ 2019 she is a Postdoctoral Research Associate, Faculty of Philosophy – Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.



## DR SOTIRIA KALASARIDOU Review of ELSA KORNETI'S *The fish on the island and other imaginative stories*

Strange cities and stranger people, contemporary fairy tales, an osmosis between the reality and the fantasy, but mostly the battle between the good and evil: these are few of the main characteristics of the short stories, which compose the new book written by Elsa Korneti, has been published in Greece by Melani publications (2020), and entitled *The fish on the island and other imaginative stories*. We could argue that nowadays the literary genre of fairy tale is quite advanced, namely not only the classical writers such as Bothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen but also writers such as Edgar Alan Poe tried to approach and explain the reality using literary patterns of the fairy tales or more often of the Magic Realism. And Korneti tries and manages exactly that: deals with the contemporary issues, problems and scourges of today sometimes not only under the perspective of the Magic Realism but also borrowed metaphors and archetypes from the fairy tales. And all the aforementioned in a very effective literary way. Let myself explain and start at the very beginning.

<https://www.politeianet.gr/books/9789605911782-korneti-elsa-melani-to-nisi-pano-sto-psari-316420>

Each one of the “fairy tales” of the book follows the structure of the short stories: a simple structure with few protagonists — sometimes nameless — a narrative without description of the time and space, quite often with no description of the action, a plot composed of escalation, crisis, a turning point and a sharp and open end but always with a precept. All the stories set questions to the readers based on the dilemmas of their protagonists, heroes and anti-heroes, and each one of the stories focuses on a very specific theme. There is a balance between the external and internal action of the protagonists, the narration is flowing based on an almost music, quite poetic language and the omniscient narrator, knows everything, is omnipresent, sometimes leaves us at the end of the story a bitter taste, other times is smiling to us in a sardonic way, with a mixture of irony and melancholy.

At this point could someone ask why these “fairy tales”, these imaginative short stories concern us. Why we have to read them and which the benefit is for the contemporary readers. The answer to the aforementioned questions can be found on the themes of stories. The theme centered reading is the key which can unlock the mystery box of the reading as a social and personal act of this specific book. If we were trying to condense into a phrase the perspective of this stories collection we could assert that the whole book is an ironic comment to the contemporary civilization. We could argue that the book itself is a metonymy regarding evil’s banality, a synecdoche of world’s rapid metamorphosis through the violent technological effects.

The reading process sets fire a series of questions which based on the following opposite pairs: nature versus technological progress, real simple life versus fake blissful life, the misery of poverty versus illusive happiness of wealth, art versus machine, faith versus betrayal, truth versus lie, mercy versus cruelty, life versus death. Let me be more analytical. The stories can be grouped in four major categories: a) those which deal with the curse of the rampant technology’s evolution. Into this group we might integrate for instance short stories such as: “*The prince of algorithm*”, “*The flower of video game*” and “*A sort of love*”. b) Those stories which reflect the revenge of the nature, stories like “*The fish on the island*”, “*The saturated*”, and “*Sea minefield*”. c) The third group consists of stories which narrate the unmerciful human’s nature and its punishment. We can say that into this group belong stories such as “*Greetings*” and “The sequence of Hyper sounds. d) Last but not least we read stories about the human feelings such stories which talk about the loss of love, the loss of faith, the loss of fatherland, the loss of life. We could integrate into this group stories such as “*The silence of the Light-house*”, “*The feather collector*” and, “*Bitter ink*”.

There is no doubt that always and throughout the centuries truth is hidden inside the fairy tales. But what sort of truth? Is just the final moral precept of the stories enough for the contemporary readers? The question is of course rhetorical and depends on the reception of each reading and on the demands of each reader. But what makes finally the stories of Korneti pretty special is that the hidden meaning, the precept is focused on the future. The futuristic prospect of the book enriches not only the meaning of the “fairy tales” but also the purpose of the act of reading.

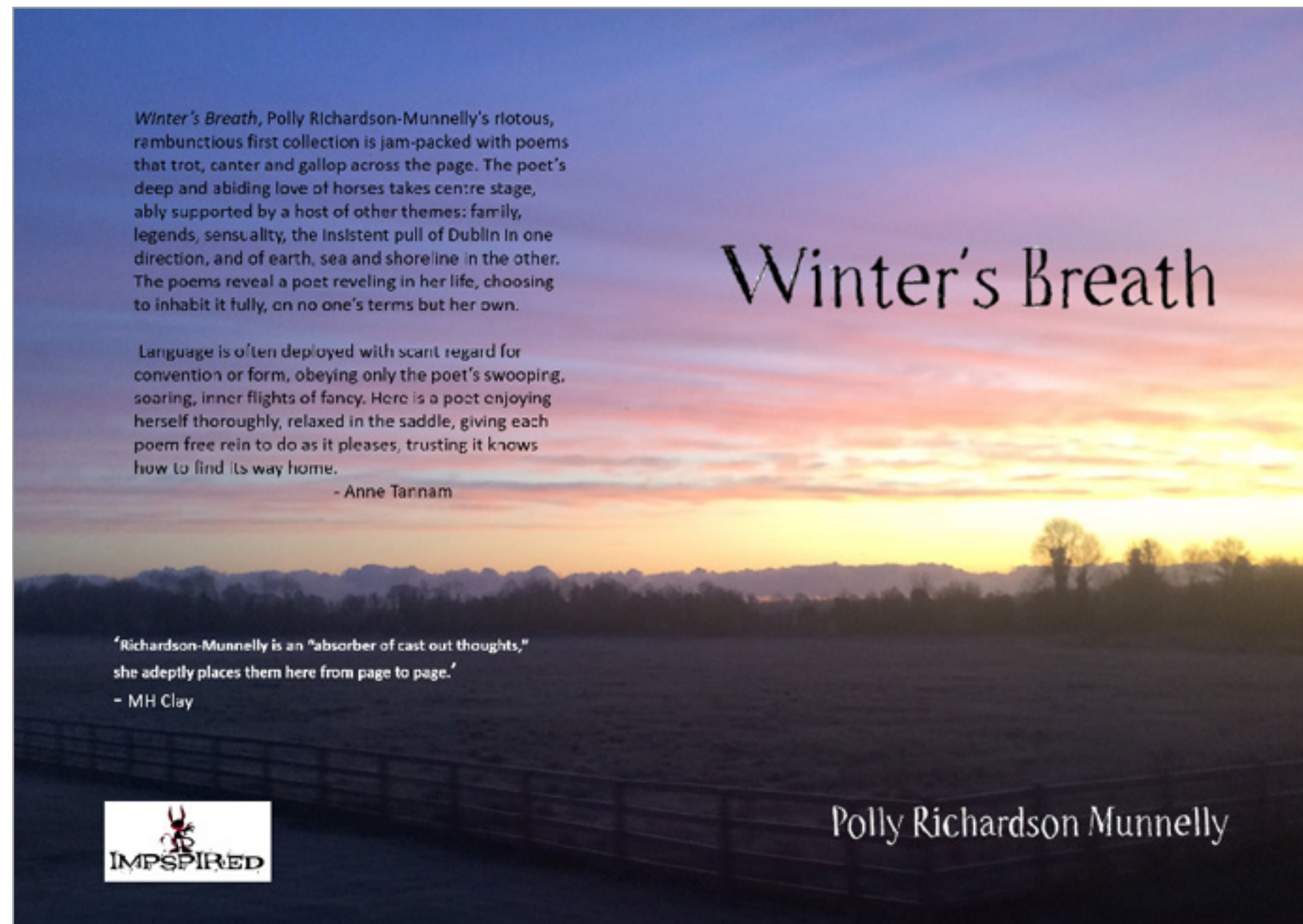




Polly Richardson Munnelly is Dublin born poet, currently living and writing in Dingle co Kerry, Ireland. She continues to run the Bulls Arse Writers group Navan co Meath remotely and her Tuesday's Zoomers group of international poets. She has been published both nationally and internationally. Her debut collection *Winter's Breath* is out and available on Amazon. She is currently working on her second collection.



Marie O'Halloran is represented by London agent, Kate Nash of Kate Nash Literary Agent under the pseudonym, Casey King. As a poet, Marie has twice judged Kanturk Arts Festival Poetry Slam, has had two poems commended in the Gregory O'Donoghue International Poetry Competition and won second place in Ennis Book Club Festival Caring for Carers Poetry Competition. Marie was the featured poet at an event for former Fulbright Professor of Poetry, Bradley Strahan and has read at various events and locations, and is published in several anthologies. As a playwright, Marie co-wrote the commercially staged play, *Catching the Train* and one of her plays was longlisted in 2019 Wexford Literary Festival's Billy Roche International Short Play Award. Her short stories have been published in *The Holly Bough*, *Ireland's Own* and *The Incubator Journal*. Marie was recently listed in *The Bookseller Magazine's* Agent Hotlist for London Book Fair. Her agent is currently negotiating a deal for her series of crime novels.



## MARIE O'HALLORAN Review of POLLY RICHARDSON MUNNELLY'S *Winter's Breath*

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Winters-Breath-polly-Richardson-Munnelly/dp/1916227163>



When I heard rumours that Polly Richardson Munnelly was bringing out a collection of poetry, I couldn't wait. Having seen her perform and, on occasion, had the honour of sharing a billing with her, I knew this would be something special.

On Winter's Breath's arrival through my letter box, after pre-ordering it when the rumours proved true, it was the perfect antidote to a long week's work. I immersed myself in a world *Beyond Horizons* to *Sheer Madness* and onto *Fat Frogs*. There is an array of offerings to balance or compliment any mood.

I consider myself lucky to be able, while reading through the words, cast my mind to memories of her performing them and to hear her voice. Yet, if you are not one of the lucky ones to have seen her orate them then you really do have a lot to look forward to. If you consider Winter's Breath as a multi-course taster followed on with hearing the poems read, it is akin to accompanying that taster menu with a fine selection of wines to satiate the palate.

Polly gives her all with each stanza, each line, every word, all pivotal in the delivery for your enjoyment. Nature, nurture, conflict, kindness, they are all weaved through her words, embroidered for you to immerse yourself in or take a light read, saving the deeper dive for later. The poems leave a lasting impression on your heart, soul and mind.

*Ivory Keys*, *Said the Bed*, *Just Trees*, stunning pieces. The book's title *Winter's Breath*, that poem it itself whips you into the eye of a tornado then lays you gently on the grass unharmed, yet enriched. I have a few favourites one of which is, *Funny How*, a poem where it grabs life by the scruff and rattles out the truth, seeing the invisible, yet touches the blush of your cheek, gently.

Polly mentions friends, family, her loves and losses. One poem, *Brass Bed* has: *for Kay*, in gentle italics, written underneath the title, dedicated to a fellow poet whose passing left a void in both the poetry world and Polly's, 'Sat on the edge of somewhere and nowhere.' A testament to her impact and a fitting poem for such a vibrant lady.

*Little Feet* - a piece, for every parent whose heart has that rip, edges so jagged that no thread can fully repair but stitch it just enough to hold it together to allow you carry on.

As for *Fox Thought and Hound - The Chase*, they are performances in themselves within every word.

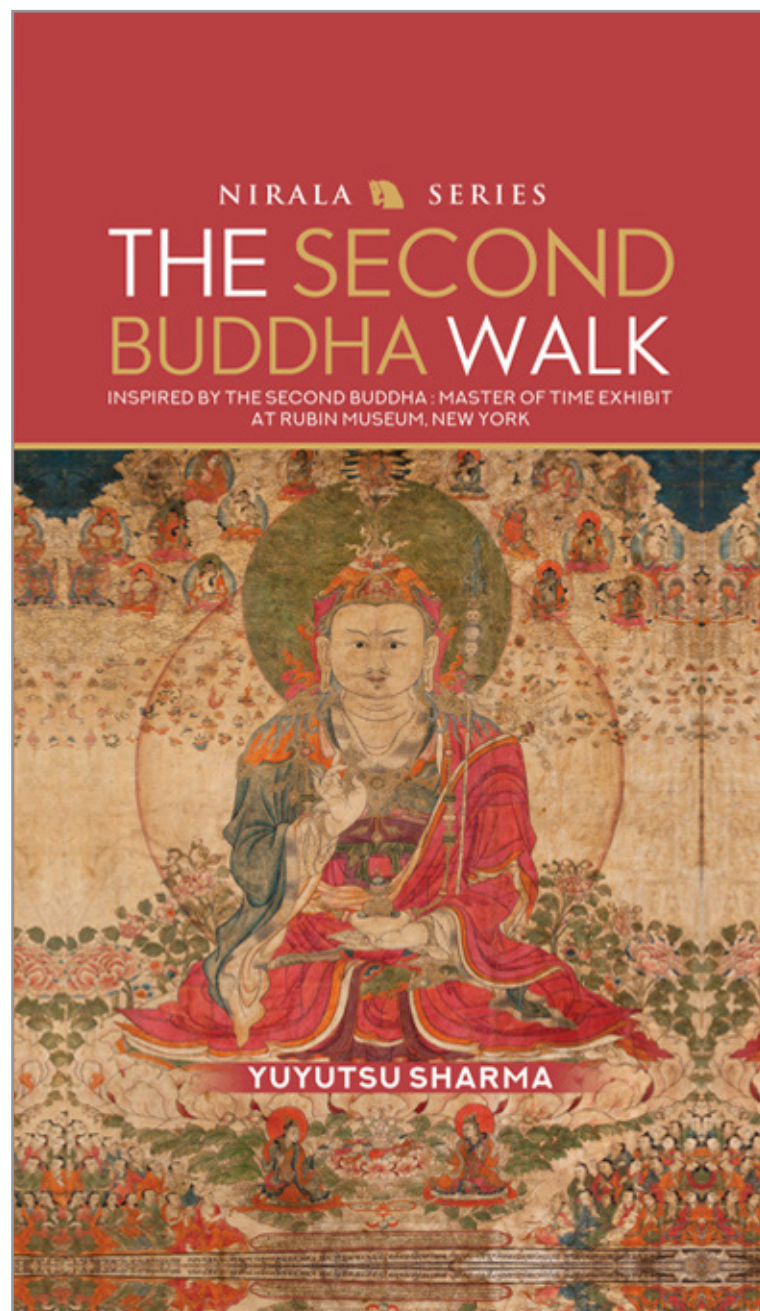
For the sheer journey of emotions, quality and content, this book deserves five stars. It is that Friday feeling and that Saturday morning lie-in. It is a bird in flight, the glory of a Golden Eagle's wingspan.



Recipient of fellowships and grants from The Rockefeller Foundation, Ireland Literature Exchange, Trubar Foundation, Slovenia, The Institute for the Translation of Hebrew Literature and The Foundation for the Production and Translation of Dutch Literature, Yuyutsu Sharma is a world renowned Himalayan poet and translator. He has published ten poetry collections including, *The Second Buddha Walk*, *A Blizzard in my Bones: New York Poems*, *Quaking Cantos: Nepal Earthquake Poems*, *Nepal Trilogy*, *Space Cake*, *Amsterdam* and *Annapurna Poems*. Three books of his poetry, *Poemes de l' Himalayas*, *Poemas de Los Himalayas* and *Jezero Fewa & Konj* have appeared in French, Spanish and Slovenian respectively. Half the year, he travels and reads all over the world and conducts Creative Writing workshops at various universities in North America and Europe but goes trekking in the Himalayas when back home. Currently, Yuyutsu Sharma is a visiting poet at Columbia University and edits, *Pratik: A Quarterly Magazine of Contemporary Writing*.



Jessica Penner's first novel, *Shaken in the Water*, was named an Editors' Choice by the Historical Novel Society. Other work appears in *Wordgathering*, *Bellevue Literary Review*, *Luna Luna*, *Necessary Fiction*, *The Fiddleback*, *Journal of Mennonite Writing*, *Rhubarb*, *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, and the anthologies *Tongue Screws and Testimonies* and *Gush*. She teaches composition at New York City College of Technology. Links to some of her work can be found at [jessicadawnpenner.com](http://jessicadawnpenner.com). She lives in New York City—Crown Heights, Brooklyn—to be exact.



## JESSICA PENNER Review of YUYUTSU SHARMA'S *The Second Buddha Walk*

"New York triggers action," writes Yuyutsu Sharma in *The Second Buddha Walk*'s introduction. As a New York City transplant, I agree, and dive into reading with gusto. I've always read poetry collections out of order, each snippet savored as a tourist would a museum. I read it now as a resident that has time to examine each piece in each gallery in order, time and again.

"What feeds the furnace?" catches my eye for the sounds of the city and the emotions it elicits: "driving the demons on a damp day away, / a conical kettle bubbling on an ancient stove." These lines bring me to an apartment in the Bronx, where my landlord's workmen had to chisel the stove out of the counter after I threatened to call ConEdison about the smell of gas. Later the speaker mentions a siren "cracking the silence of a million eons." I think of the sirens that screamed incessantly near a friend's apartment in Queens during the early days of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

"Beef" hits my thoughts on faith, as the speaker accidentally eats forbidden meat prepared by a Brooklyn host. He wonders if he can forget this information, because, after all, "Do our Gods hold any sway here?" The speaker's goddess visits him the next day with a rash, as she had once during childhood, and so he remembers his mother telling him "she will pass through your body / like an angry wind or a wave of a troubled ocean / and perhaps never return." I consider my faith, and how it has evolved since I first moved to my true home; how this city is one that will teach you, if you listen, that all gods—or no gods—have sway.

<https://www.amazon.com/Second-Buddha-Walk-Inspired-Exhibit/dp/8182500982>



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