



Flicker Tree, The: Okanagan Poems

Nancy Holmes

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How do we learn *to be* where we live? How can a 21st-century mind, saturated with the culture and metaphors of contemporary life, connect to the natural world that surrounds us? In Nancy Holmes' new book of poetry, these questions are asked of her home, the Okanagan valley in the southern interior of British Columbia. In these poems, as Holmes comes to terms with personal grief, she tries to find consolation in the place she shares with other beings. Holmes' poetry looks for relationships with the prickly pear cacti, bluebunch wheatgrass, the black bears, the coyotes, and the northern flickers. She seeks to embed herself in the geography and consciousness of this arid Western landscape, one of the most endangered ecosystems in Canada, a landscape of great beauty and spiritual power with its volcanic glaciated mountains and fragile long lakes. The result is poetry that is both elegiac and humorous, with a vision often skewed by the lenses of mass media, anxiety, and the obsessions of the contemporary world. Sometimes disturbed and questioning, sometimes delighted and awed, sometimes troubled by the history of settlers and indigenous peoples, the poems explore our complicity in the destruction of, and our love for, the wild animals, plants, and places around us.

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