

Women poets stir strong passions

"Lovers and Other Losses: Poems by Seven Women," edited by Nadean Bishop, is published by Isis Press, 1981, \$3.95.

By Jack Zucker
special writer

Anthologist Nadean Bishop of Eastern Michigan University deserves compliments for "Lovers and Other Losses: Poems by Seven Women."

Each of the poets is strong in her own craft and individuality. Patricia Hooper of Birmingham is outstanding for her unique vision and the beauty of her diction. Published widely in nationally eminent journals, Hooper presents us a world in which people dream they are other people, in which a porch or a door is rarely seen as a porch or door.

Her narrators don't take the permanence of everyday objects for granted. A person standing at a window in 1962 may also be standing at a window in the past; a daughter may be her mother and people's dreams may, in fact, be another kind of reality.

In "Other Lines" Hooper writes of a trip toward a road, "a road you took/past some else's house: porch propped up with boards/the car dismantled in the yard, a door/where half-dressed children watch you."

The everyday scene becomes a vision, an insight that a given person could have been someone else. Hooper's characters are rarely sure they are themselves, but when they are firm in the moment, when time is real, then fulfillment occurs: "Touching the cupboard, touching the plate, or each other, we touch something invisible, like a secret we almost remember, which earth hints at. Quickly I touch the blanket

as if in an ancient ritual, taking on texture and strength from the threads which were once animal fur.

If I woke in heaven, I'd say wood, bread, and your names. According to Robinson Jeffers the study of astronomy puts mankind in its place. Interestingly, Hooper includes an astronomy poem: Night after night I've seen it. Drying the dishes, or scouring. I've looked up, in my kitchen, and noticed the sun dissolving, flame after flame, into cloud.

Into deep, fathomless blackness. They say that the stars are leaving vast holes when they perish. I need no evidence, but believe this earnestly. Lorene Erickson of Livonia who teaches at Washnaw Community College, is a very different kind of poet, a realist and a storyteller. In Erickson's world, things are real and don't float off to another time and place. Erickson not only gives us the true sense of experience, but has an unrivaled feeling for passion.

I dream that no one wants you. You bring a woman to my bed. She is dark-eyed, dark-haired. Not me, perhaps my sister. You ask for her body, not for keeping, only for moments of close attention. You reach for her, feel her flesh turning free from you. You fear there may be limits, that the white heat you've lived by is passing out of you. That, soon you may not want the bloodfire, may not even remember. Erickson, author of "Seasons of Small Purpose," has written poems of equal merit on her family, her youth, womanhood. The warmth, craft and sincerity of her work can't be denied.

Judith McCombs writes earnest and insightful poetry that is muscular and tough, but contains moments of lyricism. Her books, "Sisters and Other Losses" and "Against Nature" have attracted national attention.

The poems on her father's death, which won the Nimrod prize, are memorable in this selection. I can only indicate her depth, psychological scope and homespun fiber by presenting a large selection from "The Inheritor": September, & these cold hill streets where the Quakers failed & died out. Beside the old road spires goes gray, goes bald, & the tangle barberry argues with gusts, claws at the cold, useless as grief.

Ovrgrown, dying back, ivy billows & tugs at old mortar, old walls. High overhead blue sheetwinds of cold race for the South, for warmth, for the glaring great hill of sand where my father lies dead & dead indeed.

under heaven. Nadean Bishop's poetry is most enjoyable when it is witty and serious at the same time. A narrator pushes on a sofa "and suddenly a cavern opened and my hands/Reclaimed lost treasures of 10 years: pens/scissors, pencils."

This find will become a metaphor standing for loss and gain simultaneously. Bishop gives us a touching autobiographical moment in "A Fledgling Dancer Dreams": In the dream my sweet Christian mother Did what she never did in life. She showed her age and her rage. My dark lush sister, beauty queen, Got yelled at. It was an echo of Mary Hartman

"Lovers and Other Losses" also offers poems by Carolyn Gregory, Louise Bernikow and Almitra David, all of whom deserve discussion. The book is published by Isis Press, 1516 Morton Ave., Ann Arbor. It was a Small Press Book Club monthly selection. Available at local book stores.

Bonsai gardeners meet

The first Michigan bonsai convention will be held May 21-23 at the Wayne County Extension Center, 5454 Venoy Road, Wayne.

It is open to members and friends of all bonsai clubs in Wayne and Oakland counties.

It will start at 7:30 p.m. Friday and continue through noon on Sunday. There will be a nominal charge to see the exhibit of more than 60 miniature trees.

The program will include lectures and workshops for both beginners and experienced gardeners. Workshop in-

structor will be Melba Tucker of Los Angeles.

Tucker, a master of the bonsai technique, has studied the art for 20 years. She has lifetime teaching credentials in ornamental horticulture and last year completed a five-week lecture and demonstration series in Australia.

On Sunday morning at 9 a.m. she will demonstrate how to create a miniature living landscape or Saiki. Following the demonstration, Tom O'Conner will give a slide lecture on the gardens of Japan. There is a charge.

For registration information, call 278-8488 or 278-8261.

Musicians will give seminar at Bay View

Two Oakland University music faculty members are presenting a piano seminar and master class designed for former and present students.

Flavio Varani, piano, and Robert Facko, pedagogy specialist, are giving the piano workshop in conjunction with the Bay View Music Festival in Petoskey. The workshop was given last summer for the first time and was found to be so successful, drawing students from all over the Midwest, that the event will be repeated June 21-23.

The workshop will cover teaching methods, accompanying techniques and performance and musical styles. Varani is a popular soloist in and around Detroit. He appeared at Birmingham Theater in solo recital last spring, sponsored by Birmingham Mus-

icale, and he has been a soloist with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra many times.

This year his first recording with RCA will be released, he will make a concert tour of Germany in August and in South America in October, appearing with the Venezuelan National Symphony. He received the Michigan Foundation for the Arts award earlier this month. He is assistant professor at Oakland University.

Facko received his Ph.D. from Columbia University and is considered a specialist in pedagogy for the beginning and intermediate piano student.

For several years he has directed the Summer Piano Institute at Oakland University. He is also a consultant for the International Piano Teachers Foundation.

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