



Cairn: New and Selected

POEMS BY

Peggy Shumaker

Set in Alaska and Arizona, Peggy Shumaker's new and selected writing explores the wildness of land, heart, and family.

Chosen with care, this volume represents forty years of poems and prose by Peggy Shumaker. Her distinctive cadences give voice to the landscapes and people of Alaska and Arizona. This work leads us deep into what remains unresolved, savoring mysteries of heart, mind, and soul. Matters of life and death, these poems embody exuberance and struggle and generosity.

ADVANCE PRAISE

“Brilliant book! Note how often Peggy Shumaker, profoundly wise and tender poet, writes ‘in honor’ of something or someone else—has there ever been a more generous soul? These poems of many decades invoke so many rich worlds of being . . . her elegant spirit and voice turn us all back into the more lyrical people we might be. It is her ongoing gift, and our treasure.”

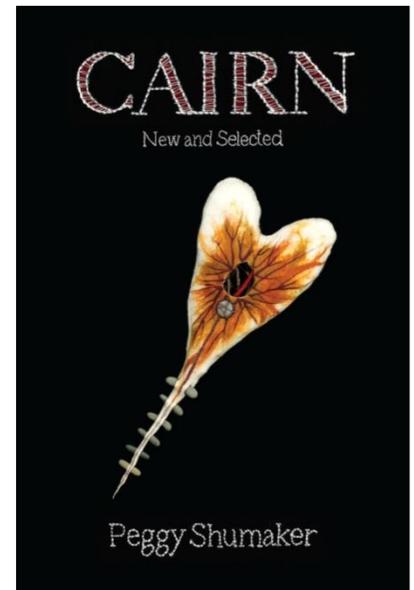
—Naomi Shihab Nye, author of *Habibi*

“Early on in *Cairn*, Peggy Shumaker asks: ‘Who are we without language?’ And I respond: ‘Who are we without this poet’s language, a tongue that often seems to be oracle, speaking to us from a parallel world?’ In this treasure trove of poetry and short prose that spans decades of her writing life, Shumaker reshapes our perception of how we move through our lives and the lives of others. As an added bonus, we’re allowed behind the scenes of her collaboration with the painter Kesler Woodward, complete with the gorgeous paintings that emerged from this conversation between two consummate artists. In all her work, Shumaker grounds us in the present moment, while also allowing us to look up and see: ‘The view / vast / beyond us.’”

—Brenda Miller, author of *Tell it Slant: Writing and Shaping Creative Nonfiction*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peggy Shumaker is the daughter of two deserts—the Sonoran Desert where she grew up and the subarctic desert of interior Alaska where she lives now. She has been honored by the Rasmuson Foundation as its Distinguished Artist, served as Alaska State Writer Laureate, and received a poetry fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. She is the author of eight books of poetry and the lyrical memoir *Just Breathe Normally*. Professor emerita from University of Alaska Fairbanks, Shumaker teaches in the Rainier Writing Workshop MFA at Pacific Lutheran University. She serves on the boards of the Prairie Schooner Book Prize, the Alaska Arts and Culture Foundation, and the Storyknife Residency Foundation. She is Editor of the Boreal Books series (an imprint of Red Hen Press), Editor of the Alaska Literary Series at University of Alaska Press, Poetry Editor for *Persimmon Tree*, and Contributing Editor for *Alaska Quarterly Review*. Visit her website at www.peggyshumaker.com.



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FROM CAIRN: NEW & SELECTED

Shapeshifters

One morning a poet wakes,
reaches for her beloved, speaks

with passion
pure nonsense.

The partner, startled
from sleep,

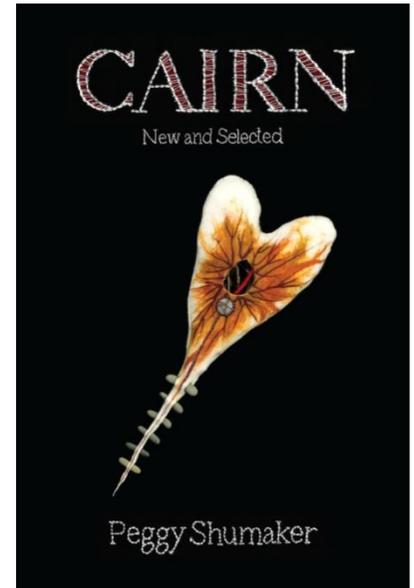
can't put together
their garbled situation.

Her woman, self-made,
who shaped herself with words

has now reworded
her fluent tongue, chopped

word-parts tongue whipped
till she's giving voice to shards,

shattered sounds not yet
nor ever connected.



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