



News from

Red Hen Press

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Gnawed Bones

Poems by

Peggy Shumaker

From wildfire and war to bleached reefs and human frailty, Peggy Shumaker's new poems meditate on mortality. Her poems speak with elegiac force for lost languages, lost ancestors, lost ways of being. This work sharpens the edges of our perception, drawing on the inner life, on secrets that keep us alive. With language as lyrical as the natural world, the poems in *Gnawed Bones* nourish us.

Gnawed Poems

Poems by Catherine Kirkwood

ISBN: 978-1-59709-156-5

6 x 9; tradepaper

120 pages

Price: US \$19.95

Biographical note:

Two deserts shape **Peggy Shumaker's** work—the Sonoran Desert of southern Arizona, where she grew up, and the subarctic desert of Interior Alaska, where she lives now. Professor emerita from University of Alaska Fairbanks, she teaches in the Rainier Writing Workshop MFA Program and for many writing conferences and festivals. She is founding editor of Boreal Books, www.borealbooks.org.

Praise for *Gnawed Bones*:

“Good heavens, what a book. No, rather good earth, good sad mortal body, what a book. Shumaker writes without blame, but with utter clarity and precision and story-telling skill about places on earth and our place among them—Alaska, Hawaii, the saguaro-studded desert—and about foxes, deer, swallows, who co-inhabit with us “under a sun / more agitated / this year than the last,” then about the father who wanted to fly, the mother who wanted to die. Finally she comes to her own brush with death. I couldn't stop reading, sometimes weeping, always awed. Whatever Shumaker touches is thick with life, death, and the blessing of her words.”

—Alicia Ostriker, author of *No Heaven* and *The Book of Seventy*

“Shumaker uses words like an artist uses paint. Color, meaning, innuendo and exclamation mingle, creating new colors, new nuances, new ways of seeing familiar objects. And her juxtapositions are extraordinary.”

— Libbie Martin, *The Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*



More Praise for *Gnawed Bones*:



“Peggy Shumaker's sixth full-length collection, *Gnawed Bones*, is perhaps her finest. Shumaker ... covers a wide range—but she casts a far more personal eye, worrying at the puzzle of human relationships as well as human connection to the land itself.”

—Judith Kitchen, *The Georgia Review*

“Her newest collection, *Gnawed Bones*, is infused with her generosity and a tenderness that is all-encompassing. Shumaker's vision casts a wide net—Alaska, Hawaii, the past, the present, art, wildfire, death—nothing is excluded.... The grace that is so much Peggy Shumaker's hallmark is the keystone of the collection. It is like having a tour guide who sees the world with eyes that cherish. Even pain, even sorrow is luminous when held up to the light of Peggy's eyes.”

—Erin Hollowell

“Slick, brutal and weird, these stories remind us of the violence that lurks at the edges of our awareness. From the sketchy-looking high-desert drifter to the nightmares derived from our own past, Roberge reminds us there's no escape from our desires, and sometimes those who don't survive are the lucky ones.”

—Jim Ruland

“There is so much more careful observation, music, meditation, and clear, though complex, thinking in the poem of this book than a short review can capture. Peggy Shumaker's *Gnawed Bones* is a book to buy, to read and re-read, a book to turn to when in need of a way to access the secrets of the natural world including one's own life.”

—Margaret Rozga, *Gently Read Literature*

“Long Before We Got Here, Long After We're Gone”

In the season blue-white sun
barely lifts above the ridge,
limps along the horizon
then dives out of sight,
we're changed each day by light.

Someone who's gone before
broke trail, set tracks.
With the right kick wax,
we make our way among birch
breathing hard rare frosted light.

We make of light arpeggio crystals,
caribou dance fans, shush
of bristles. One moment made
alive, human, unafraid.
All that's lost not gone.

