

News from

**Red Hen Press**

P.O. BOX 40820 Pasadena, CA 91114 \* (626) 356-4760 fax: (626) 256-9974

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Allegheny, Monongahela

POETRY BY

ERINN BATYKEFER

Using the confluence of rivers in Pittsburgh as a metaphorical lens, *Allegheny, Monongahela* probes the ruinous misalignment between the external and internal lives of two sisters and their childhood in Western Pennsylvania. Their complex and difficult relationship is the spine of the collection, told obliquely through a series of sonnets and ekphrastic meditations on the paintings of Georgia O'Keeffe: the ways in which they separately navigate a violent family history that reverberates through their present and futures; their polarized impulses toward creativity and self-destruction. Rooted in a mutable, watery landscape that is not consistently recognizable, *Allegheny, Monongahela* investigates the collisions between the world and the self, the fissured identities that result, and the ways in which art may heal or fail to heal the cracks.

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*Allegheny, Monongahela*

Poetry by Erinn Batykefer

ISBN: 1-59709-134-0

Binding: Tradepaper

Size: 6 x 9; Pages: 88

Price: US \$16.95

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Praise for *Allegheny, Monongahela*:

Close to the bone, Erinn Batykefer's poems—sharp-edged as O'Keeffe's paintings, skeletons visible and harrowing—are harsh and devastating torrents of rage, love, and misdirected desire. Poems tangle with a grandfather's murder, a family's violence, the wildness of sex, love indulged or denied, scouring to bedrock any easy assumptions. Her poems are floodwaters, her poems are the river's skin after rain. Necessary and vibrant, they help us savor our flawed and damaged world. Here is an important new voice in American poetry.

—Peggy Shumaker

All wounds and precise cutting, Errin Batykefer's first collection is a series of invocations to memory -- of the divided self in the body of another, the blood residue after loss. We read to know the triumph of these brilliant and life-saving poems on the page. The marks they leave are indelible.

—Hilda Raz

Biographical note:

Erinn Batykefer's first collection, *Allegheny, Monongahela*, was chosen by Peggy Shumaker as winner of the 2008 Benjamin Saltman Prize at Red Hen Press and hailed as a "haunting, sinuous debut" made of "a language at once torrential yet controlled, dark yet luminous" (Quan Barry). Her work has earned numerous awards, including a Martha Meier Renk Distinguished Poetry Fellowship at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a Stadler Poetry Fellowship at Bucknell University, where she also served as Stadler Associate Editor of *West Branch*. Erinn is currently at work on a new collection of poetry that re-imagines *Jane Eyre*, as well as a memoir she describes as "a fractured coming-of-age story about sisterhood, rowing, art, masochism, anorexia and bulimia, American girlhood, love, cruelty, and really great 90s music, among other things." She lives in Pennsylvania.