

# REPORT FROM THE FEMINIST CAUCUS COMMITTEE

By Anne Burke, Chair

If you have not already contributed a poem to *Poems from the Feminist Caucus, II*, on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Feminist Caucus of the League of Canadian Poets, there is still time to do so. Contact Editor Katerina Fretwell with your submission. Copies of volume I (2005) can be purchased from the League office. Thank you to the donors who help underwrite the costs of production for this project. You can become a matron, patron, or androgyne, receive recognition in print, as well as a tax receipt. Susan Andrews Grace, a Past Feminist Caucus Chair and author of *Ferry Woman's History of the World* (Coteau Books, 1998) has a new title *Flesh, A Naked Dress* (Hagios Press, 2006). Catherine Howard, editor of *The Muse in Canadian Women's Poetry*, has moved and is now officially an Edmonton-based poet. Her most recent collection *Cusp/detritus: an experiment in alleyways*, with photographs by Karen Moe, was published by Anvil Press. Catherine's muse was Frank Bonneville, a schizophrenic and drug-addicted artist, who committed suicide by jumping from the fifth floor of the Montreal General Hospital. Doris Bircham, in *Where Blue Grama Grows* (Hagios Press, 2006) draws on her forty years of hands-on ranching experience. Sylvia Adams, in *Sleeping on the Moon*, (Hagios Press, 2006) was inspired by Florence von Sass, a young refugee, who was purchased at a Turkish Slave Auction by widower Samuel Baker, an explorer, in 1859. For Victorian female captivity narratives see: "Feminine Vulnerability, (neo) Colonial captives, and Rape Scares", by Kate Higginson, in *ReCalling Early Canada: Reading the Political in*

*Literary and Cultural Production* (The University of Alberta Press, 2005, pp. 35-72.)

Margaret Atwood had this to say of *Diving into the Wreck*, by Adrienne Rich, "These poems convince me most often when they are true to themselves as structures of words and images, when they resist the temptation to sloganize, when they don't preach at me." I came across this in *Feminisms and Womanisms: A Woman's Studies Reader*, edited by Althea Prince and Susan Silva-Wayne (Toronto: Women's Press, an imprint of Canadian Scholars' Press Inc., 2004, p. 398) with Bibliography. You can have a look for yourself at [www.womenspress.ca](http://www.womenspress.ca). There are many recent titles dealing with Muslim Female Identity in the Diaspora; A Caribbean Woman's Identity in Canada; Women, Work and Society; Three Generations of Women's Work in the Home; Empowering Motherhood; The Muslim Veil in North America; Gender, Sport and Sexualities; Narratives of Iranian Women from the Diaspora; Women in the Strip Trade; Marxism and Anti-Racism. I found Margaret Cruikshank's, "A Feminist's View of Gerontology and Women's Aging", from *Learning to be Old: Gender, Culture, and Aging* (Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003) to be particularly instructive. On "Gerastology: A Feminist's View", she considers strengths, life changes, longevity, research, housing, standpoint theory, and crones. She concludes: "having no models, we improvise. Later, perhaps, we organize." (p. 297)

Jennifer Boire, Co-Chair of the upcoming panel on Women in Canadian History, is preparing a winter 2007 course to look at the "Sacred Feminine and Symbols of Motherhood". She has also organized workshops on Women's Bodies Women's Hearts. Together with many other poets, she contributed to the Poetry Project, on the net at Muses Apprentice Guild, and the Museum of Menstruation ([mum.org](http://mum.org)). You can read and

contribute to her blog at [www.questinggirl.blogspot.com](http://www.questinggirl.blogspot.com) or email her at [jenco1@sympatico.ca](mailto:jenco1@sympatico.ca) . Musemother (September 7, 2006) answers the question: "why I need to love my mother as myself." You can read and post on the site for topics, such as "Queen takes her menopausal rest"; "Quotes for Wild Women Writers"; "Embracing the feminine"; "The dance of intimacy"; "Soul of a Child alive and Well". In addition, "Honouring the inner masculine" deals with healing the father-daughter relationship and is about the fathering you received. An excerpt from *The Sacred Hoop*, by Paula Gunn Allen, appears as "women's power and menstruation", which includes perimenopause (October 20, 2006); the origins of PMS; and an excerpt from Jennifer's forthcoming collection, "The Tao of Turning Fifty: A Woman's Way" (posted Friday, 13 October, 2006).

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