

A Poet's Voice

Peggy Fletcher

Peggy Fletcher was born in Newfoundland, now resides in Sarnia, Ontario. A visual arts graduate from UWO, she has worked as a journalist, shop keeper and teacher while pursuing a career in writing. She has eight poetry books, several chapbooks, a short story collection, and a two act play about Emily Carr. Her work has appeared in many journals such as *Room*, *Mobius*, *Antigonish Review*, *Ascent Aspirations*, and *Verse Afire*, and she has won a number of awards. She is also a painter and active environmentalist.

Author's Statement Born beside the sea and still living by one of the Great Lakes, I am constantly confronted with the power of nature, its beauty, and the way we have ravished its many natural forms. Poets have an obligation to speak of and to their contemporary world, and my Northern roots insist on being heard. My visual sense demands that I seek unusual images and lyrics to paint word pictures for the reader as I strive for original thought and understanding. I respect traditional and contemporary attempts to achieve this goal.

Post History Lesson

Early explorers
would be in rapture
to see huge chunks of ice
breaking away and floating
in dark blue channels
of frigid water.

The great Northern route
to China so keenly sought
now opens its icy gates
to a group of grumbling neighbours
who seek not myrrh or spices
from an Oriental cornucopia
of world riches

but rivers of oil
below the raging surface
of Arctic seas, to gust
a new way to the top
of universal greed
through the broken cap
of an ailing north.

Rooted To Art

The green umbrella
of my imagination
provides shelter
for my strangest thoughts.

Painted gardens compel me
to flatten the perspective
and thrust it onto a prepared canvas.

Sometimes I move beyond that point
stroll the picture's horizon
enter the land of creation

where line becomes the medium
for understanding thought
colour, its resolution.

I am a tree with roots
my trunk and branches are alive
with layers of new leaves, I revel
in life's beauty and want
to draw myself
a complete portrait of inner faith.

The umbrella folds. The rain is over.
my journey into the self is complete.

A Day in the Life

Small black flower of midnight
unfolds its petals
studded with bright stars

as the long stem of darkness
reaches roots of tomorrow
unearths a new dawn face

plants bright daylight smile
in place of a swirling frown

stretches mid-morning earth limbs
beneath trend-setting raindrops
hair brushing winds

to stir infant wheat heads
into unnatural curls

as afternoon fingers of warm sunlight
tease thin green tendrils
of prairie grasses

out of the moist and sensuous mist
of evening's cooling form, a new darkness
gathering behind sunset's colourful wings.

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Let Them Have Their Fling

We have grown older, my generation
waist-thickened, far-sighted bobby soxers
who swooned over long-stemmed mikes
lust curled up in the back seat of a Torpedo Buick
our parents' words skimmed over us, lightly
we skated down thin ice, chasing love
down blind alleys. Too late, the surface breaks
disillusionment ages our faces. Now we echo
the words on guilt-clad tongues, castigating
the latest young who have stolen our places,
joy curled up on the front seat of a Honda young.
Breathless they ignore us, their laughing eyes
seeking the elusive, the magic prize
on the merry-go-wrong of tomorrow
and no one needs to tell them, they'll find out
for themselves it's all illusion. There is no ring
no free extended ride on the whirly world of youth.
Soon the music slows, the motors stop.
They have to get off and make room
for the next ones. See they are lining up already.
those *avante garde* children of the future.

Circle of Friends

We creak with age like old ships
anchored in some forgotten harbour.

Our skin once glowing bright
and beacon eyes, clear as polished glass
are muted now to worn and faded hues.

More delicate than canvas sail
a creased and fragile swirl of lines
etch all our pain and joy in spidery script
upon the manuscript of life.

And yet, like noble vessels bent
and ruined by time
there is a solid beauty to be found
in old familiar smiles
a steady stubbornness of will
a mesh of spirit netted
into one small circle
of humanity

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Communication

E-mails race through
unseen worlds
this wretched night.

Blizzards do not matter
as electronic sparks
leap through cables
explode into being.

The birth of words
from your desk to mine
while the yard fills
with white misery.

A Canadian winter
crouches outside our doors
ready to attack
all warm-blooded animals
it encounters.

While we turn ourselves
Into cyber-beasts
creep silently
through telespace
and outwit
the all encompassing storm.