Classic Poetry Series

Elise Paschen

- poems -

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Elise Paschen

Elise Paschen, a poet of Osage descent, is the co-founder and co-editor of Poetry in Motion, a program which places poetry posters in subways and buses across the country. The daughter of renowned prima ballerina, Maria Tallchief, and Chicago builder Henry D. Paschen, she was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois, where she attended the Francis W. Parker School. A graduate of Harvard University, she holds M.Phil. and D.Phil. degrees in 20th Century British and American Literature from Oxford University.

Her poems have been published in The New Yorker, The New Republic, Ploughshares and Shenandoah.

Executive Director of the Poetry Society of America from 1988 until 2001, she recently was appointed the Poet Laureate of Three Oaks, Michigan. She was the featured Illinois poet at the National Book Festival sponsored by the Library of Congress in September 2006. Dr. Paschen teaches in the MFA Writing Program at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She lives in Chicago with her husband, Stuart Brainerd, and their two children.

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Works

Houses: Coasts (Sycamore Press, Oxford, 1985)

Infidelities (Story Line Press, 1996)

Bestiary (Red Hen Press, 2009)

Anthologies featuring her poems

Reinventing the Enemy’s Language: Contemporary Native Women’s Writings of North America (1997)

Ravishing DisUnities: Real Ghazals in English (2000)

The POETRY Anthology, 1912—2002 (2002)

A Formal Feeling Comes: Poems in Form by Contemporary Women (2007)

Editor or co-editor

Poetry in Motion (1996)

Poetry Speaks (2001)

Poetry in Motion from Coast to Coast (2002)

Poetry Speaks to Children (2005)

Poetry Speaks Expanded (2007)

Poetry Speaks Who I Am (2010)

Birth Day

For Alexandra, born May 17, 1999

Armored in red, her voice commands
every corner. Bells gong on squares,
in steeples, answering the prayers.
Bright tulips crown the boulevards.

Pulled from the womb she imitates
that mythic kick from some god's head.
She roars, and we are conquered.
Her legs, set free, combat the air.

Naked warrior: she is our own.
Entire empires are overthrown.

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