

Classic Poetry Series

Erin Mouré

- 3 poems -

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Erin Mouré (17 April 1955)

Erin Mouré is a Canadian poet and translator of poetry from languages which include, French, Galician, Portuguese and Spanish to English.

Biography

Her mother Mary Irene was born 1924 in Galicia, Western Ukraine (then Poland) and emigrated to Canada in 1929.(ref) Erin's father is William Moure born in Ottawa Canada in 1925. Erin is the oldest of 3, having two younger brothers, Ken and Bill. In 1975 Erin moved to Vancouver, British Columbia, where she took her second year classes at University of British Columbia in philosophy. After only taking one year of classes Erin left University of British Columbia and got a job at Via Rail Canada where she continued to write poetry and is where she learnt French, Erin still lives in Montreal Canada

Writing and Style

According to an interview conducted in the early 1990s, Erin has four major influences which led her to become a writer, other than the work of other writers or poets: "Landscape of cars, her mother going to work, her mother teaching her to read, and in a small way losing her sense of touch"[5] Of her more recent work, Melissa Jacques has written: "Erin Mouré's poetry is fragmented, meta-critical and explicitly deconstructive. Folding everyday events and ordinary people into complex and often irresolvable philosophical dilemmas, Mouré challenges the standards of accessibility and common sense. Not surprisingly, her work has met with a mixed response. Critics are often troubled by the difficult and therefore alienating nature of the writing; even amongst Mouré's advocates, the issues of accessibility and political efficacy are recurrent themes."(on Moure's EPC page, external link below).

Erin has been nominated and won many writing awards for both her writing and her translation. Some of these awards are the Pat Lowther Memorial Award, Governor General's Award for poetry, A.M.Klein Prize for Poetry.

Works:

Works of Poetry

Empire, York Street - 1979 (nominated for a Governor General's Award)
Wanted Alive - 1983
Domestic Fuel - 1985 (winner of the Pat Lowther Award)
Furious - 1988 (winner of the 1988 Governor General's Award for poetry)
WSW - 1989 (winner of the A. M. Klein Prize for Poetry)
Sheepish Beauty, Civilian Love - 1992

The Green Word: Selected Poems: 1973-1992 - 1994
Search Procedures - 1996 (nominated for a Governor General's Award)
A Frame of the Book - 1999
Pillage Laud - 1999, reissued 2011
O Ciudadán - 2002 (nominated for a Governor General's Award)
Little theatres - 2005 (winner of the A. M. Klein Prize for Poetry, nominated for a Governor General's Award, nominated for the Pat Lowther Award, shortlisted for the 2006 Canadian Griffin Poetry Prize)
O Cadoiro - 2007
Expeditions of a Chimæra (collaboration with Oana Avasilichioaei) - 2009 (shortlisted for the 2011 A. M. Klein Prize for Poetry)
O Resplandor - 2010 (shortlisted for the 2011 A. M. Klein Prize for Poetry)
The Unmemntioable - 2012

A Real Motorcycle

Unspeakable. The word that fills up the
poem, that the head
tries to excise.
At 6 a.m., the wet lion. Its sewn plush face
on the porch rail in the rain.
Heavy rains later, & maybe a thunderstorm.
12 or 13 degrees.

Inside: an iris, candle, poster of the
many-breasted Artemis in a stone hat
from Anatolia

A little pedal steel guitar

A photograph of her at a table by the sea,
her shoulder blocked by the red geranium.
The sea tho invisible can be smelled by the casual watcher
Incredible salt air
in my throat when I see her.

'Suddenly you discover that you'll spend your entire life
in disorder; it's all that you have; you must learn to live
with it.'

2

Four tanks, & the human white-shirted body
stopped on June 5 in Place Tian an Men.

Or 'a red pullover K-Way.' There is not much time left
to say these things. The urgency of that,

desire that dogged the body all winter
& has scarcely left,
now awaits the lilacs, their small white bunches.
Gaily.
As if their posies will light up
the curious old intentional bruise.

Adjective, adjective, adjective, noun!

3

Or just, lilac moon.

What we must, & cannot, excise from the head.
Her hand holding, oh, The New Path to the Waterfall?
Or the time I walked in too quickly, looked up
at her shirtless, grinning.
Pulling her down into the front of me, silly!
Sitting down sudden to make a lap for her...
Kissing the back of her leg.

4

Actually the leg kiss was a dream, later enacted
we laughed at it,
why didn't you do it
she said
when you thought of it.

The excisable thought, later
desired or
necessary.
Or shuddered at, in memory.

Later, it is repeated for the cameras
with such unease.

& now, stuck in the head.
Like running the motorcycle full-tilt into the hay bales.
What is the motorcycle doing in the poem

A. said.

It's an image, E. said back.
It's a crash in the head, she said.

It's a real motorcycle.

Afterthought 1

0 excise this: her back turned,
she concentrates on something
in a kitchen sink,
& I sit behind her,
running my fingers on
the table edge.

0 excise this.

Afterthought 2

& after, excise, excise.
If the source of the pain could be located
using geological survey equipment.
Into the sedimentary layers, the slippage,
the surge of the igneous intrusion.
Or the flat bottom of the former sea
I grew up on,
Running the motorcycle into the round
bay bales.

Hay grass poking the skin.
The back wet.

Hey, I shouted,
Her back turned to me, its location
now visible only in the head.

When I can't stand it,
I invent anything, even memories.

She gets up, hair stuck with hay.

I invented this. Yeow.

Erin Mouré

The Chord

Courageous lair "might prevail"
Waking up to her your "yellow coal"

Steals a its way

harm's imbrogliatic murmur
to concatenate

has been "said"
a mortal habitation or cut in air

that air leaks through

here too

Tricked again out of
hope's chord

The oscillatory hum in the head, or
amygdala

continual reaction in the wet mouth to
old oranges, or

mistakes in form
"I retain a clear memory of afternoon light."

A vertebra unfolds its wing, its smallest
wing, the pleasure particulate of such a wing

(harp's corde)

a our mycelium

Anonymous submission.

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The Cold

There was a cold
In which

A line of water across the chest risen
(dream)

Impetuate, or
Impetuates

Orthograph you cherish, a hand her
Of doubt importance

Her imbroglio the winnowing of ever
Does establish

An imbroglio, ever
she does repeatedly declare

to no cold end
Admonish wit, at wit's end, where "wit" is

The cold of which
her azul gaze impart a stuttered pool

Memoria address me here (green)

Echolalic fear
Her arm or name in French says "smooth"

A wine-dark seam inside the head, this name
The "my" head I admit, or consonantal glimmer

Insoluble
Or wet fields the vines or eucalyptus wood

Lift from, here

Whose cartilage did grief still bear?
Whose silent wound?
Who submitted?
Who fortuitously was grave?
A trepidation honest
Whose declaration met silence?
Whose demurred?
Whose wall shored up became
houses?
Whose "will"?

Whose sympathetic concatenation? Whose picture
withstood "ordeal"?
Who caressed "that tiger"?
Whose laugh at an airport called forth? Whose ground
shifted?

Anonymous submission.

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