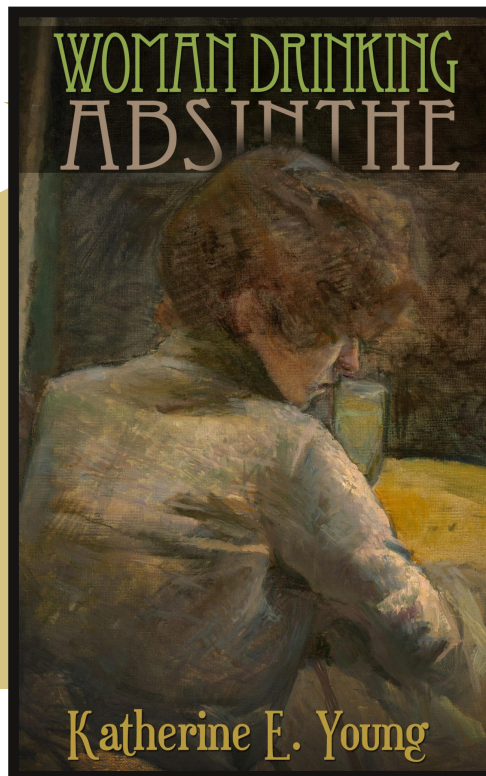


WOMAN DRINKING ABSINTHE

A New Collection of Poems by Katherine E. Young

... *Love,*
my son, when it finally comes—unlooked-for,
savage, bursting riotous into bloom,
stunning us while we lie dreaming—love's
the only thing worth fighting for.



The poems in *Woman Drinking Absinthe* probe the extremes of passion and transgression, desire and its aftermath. The mood is Paris, the morning after a debauch: bitter hot chocolate, a croissant, and a strong aftertaste of the previous night. The setting is Art Nouveau, with its ornament and excess; the playlist is Debussy, Ravel, Stravinsky, and Puccini. Although we are firmly in the city, there's a whiff of the forest's folktales and monsters, bears and Bluebeard.

The women of these poems, from the naïf who willfully ignores evidence of Bluebeard's crimes to Manet's dispirited barmaid at the Folies-Bergère, brush off convention at their peril, even though convention imperils their bodies, their spirits, and their art. In this second collection, Young, whose earlier *Day of the Border Guards* explored Russian history and literature, continues to ask the hard questions: Why does love fail? How can art come from pain? What heals the soul?

Praise for *Woman Drinking Absinthe*



Katherine Young's poems wrap with equal grace around bears and Bluebeard, salt and calculus, as they shift between local and global, past and present. Everything gets in: through all five senses, drinks tasted, birdsong heard, each line slipping under your skin. *Woman Drinking Absinthe* is a book stark with truth but alive with magic, and in it Young illuminates the broken but beautiful world we inhabit.

Jesse Lee Kercheval

Zona Gale Professor of English at University of Wisconsin–Madison; author of *Cinema Muto*



Woman Drinking Absinthe jolts like a sugar cube dipped in wormwood. Young chronicles the body's messy, inexplicable hungers with all the props of a well-stocked mind: Euclidean geometry, Manet's ambivalent barmaid at the Folies Bergère, the bloody tale of Bluebeard, the colonizing love triangle of *Madama Butterfly*, and even the inescapable legacy of a Civil War battlefield. From the first heady, musical poem, you, too, will succumb to Young's "viridescent dreams."

Karen Kovacic

Former Indiana Poet Laureate; author of *Metropolis Burning*



Woman Drinking Absinthe is an emotional rescue operation, survival guide, and call to arms. How do you navigate the minefields of the heart? Avoid the collateral damage of relationships? Katherine E. Young finds keys in nature, in opera, in seasoning, in Civil War battlefields, phantom limbs, shadows, and invisible flowers. This book is a puzzle pulsing with universal need, and yet, she adds coyly, "Who doesn't want to be mesmerized by love?"

Richard Peabody

Founder and editor of *Gargoyle Magazine*; author of *Guinness on the Quay*



In *Woman Drinking Absinthe*, Katherine Young describes a precarious existence in the shadowed world, "beneath the city's skin," in darkened streets, parking lots and jazz bars, meeting men whose "fingers flense [her] face" in temporary rooms. A prize-winning literary translator, Young infuses this deeply moving book with echoes of Russia—Marina Tsvetayeva, tsarinas, and tame bears. Young's voice is sometimes dark, sometimes ironic, but always musical and world-wise, as when she instructs us, in "Planning Your Suburban Affair," to "seek the hole between lampposts: bone in the throat/ of the universe that buys you time."

Nancy Naomi Carlson

Chevalier of the Order of the Academic Palms; author of *An Infusion of Violets*



Katherine E. Young is the author of *Day of the Border Guards*, 2014 Miller Williams Arkansas Poetry Prize finalist, and two chapbooks. Her poems have appeared in *Prairie Schooner*, *The Iowa Review*, *Subtropics*, and many others. She is the translator of *Look at Him* by Anna Starobinets, *Farewell, Aylis* by Azerbaijani political prisoner Akram Aylisli, and two poetry collections by Inna Kabysh. Young's translations of contemporary Russian-language poetry and prose have won international awards; several translations have been made into short films. Young was named a 2020 Arlington County (Virginia) Individual Artist Grant recipient, a 2017 National Endowment for the Arts translation fellow, and a 2015 Hawthornden Fellow (Scotland). From 2016-2018, she served as the inaugural Poet Laureate for Arlington, Virginia. <https://katherine-young-poet.com>

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