

Poets

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Judith Arcana
Jason Guriel

Steven Heighon
Ray Hsu
Tanis MacDonald

Yvonne Murphy
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Russell Thornton

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Mark Yakich

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A Comment on the Poems

This set of poems comes from a series on illness and the body on which I've been working, along with a parallel research project about medical discourse in literature. I wrote my doctoral dissertation on feminist readings of the elegy in Canadian literature, and my questions about the place of the moribund body in poetry are historically and politically situated in questions about power and grief. Of course, the body refuses to be reduced to a set of ideological parameters, which makes it, fortunately, a slippery poetic subject.

Stylistically, I have been moving in two seemingly contradictory directions since the publication of my last book (*Fortune*, 2003). That book contains a number of poems that work with rhyme and traditional forms, alongside longer-lined prose poems that imitate the rhythms of speech or storytelling. Lately, my interest in a broken or fragmented line – ragged speech, decisive utterances – has been combined with the speedy, rushed rhythm with which I've experimented in the past. I like the surprise of the broken cadence in a formalist pattern, or the clash of a flat, almost discursive voice inside a lyrical sweep. I want to push the language harder in order access a kind of functional discordance that describes the life of a body, ill or well.