



Deborah Leipziger – 5 Poems

Written on Skin

In cursive and script your kiss
Is indelibly written on skin.

Even now, the cut from your birth
Echoing the rain is written on skin.

The numbers from a time of horror
Are held written on skin.

Just as the rings record the age of the tree
My ages and years are written on skin.

The wood from the forest for the violin
Its music etched in wood, written on skin.

The umbilical cord coiled around my neck
Is still there, pulsating purple, written on skin.

The parchment of history of storied sacrifice
Is written on hides, written on skin.

In ink and dust, blood and bruise
My history is written on skin.

The newspaper stories of massacre
Collapse and famine are written on skin.

Your touch on my earlobe, fingerprints on my face
Words and deeds unbidden, written on skin.

[The phrase “Written on Skin” is the title of an opera by George Benjamin.]

After the bombing they quoted Emily Dickinson

The helicopters hovered for days
A penumbra, a presence
The only thing puncturing the silence
Were sirens
And the phone
We are OK we tell friends from Brazil and Nigeria
All eyes upon us

Life could not really continue as before
Though the cherry blossoms have opened
And the seventy year old dogwood has flowered outside my window
Tectonic plates have shifted

My eyes meet the eyes of strangers
Open, unabashed we bear witness
Our city in lockdown
Contained and seething

Abalone

Your eyes take in everything
my every pore
my brows and lashes.
“It’s abalone,” you say
fingering the shell that hangs
around my neck.

It’s the tiny grooves along
the edge,
a row of apertures
that give it away.

This which once breathed
lies in your palm
nacreous contours radiate
like the bright lights on the track
before the train arrives.

Now alone
I caress the word
abalone

this small ear of the ocean.

Venom

How my mouth holds the last consonant
And how it longs to drip
From my mouth
Just like the snake can be milked
Take the venom from my fangs
Each pearl drop

Take it –
Its antidote in your mouth

Vessel

My first visit to Jerusalem leads me
to iridescent glass vases
of the darkest purple
and waning blue
of green so pale
it seems the Dead Sea pours forth.

The colors bleed and blur like veins
moving and shifting
so that the very dripping is collected
remembered.

Deborah Leipziger is an author, poet, and professor. *Flower Map* is her first chapbook and is published by Finishing Line Press, <http://flowermap.net/> (June, 2013). Her poems have been featured in *Salamander*, *Ibbetson Street*, *Voices Israel*, *Bagels with the Bards*, and *The Muddy River Poetry Review*. Ms. Leipziger is the co-founder of *Soul-Lit*, an online journal for spiritual poetry. <http://soul-lit.com/> She is the author of several books on human rights and the environment, including *The Corporate Responsibility Code Book*, (Greenleaf, 2010). Her books have been translated into Portuguese, French, Korean, and Chinese. Ms. Leipziger is a Senior Fellow at Babson and an Adjunct Faculty Member at Simmons School of Management. She advises companies, NGOs, and UN agencies on issues relating to sustainability and social value creation. Deborah was born in Brazil and has lived in the UK and the Netherlands. She lives in Brookline, MA with her three daughters, her muses.