

Laura Foley – Two Poems

We Named Her Cumpleaños

She cocooned on my birthday, spinning wildly all day,
then hung like a stilled green bell, from a leaf stem
I had placed in the open jug we called her home.

Ten days on, her covering turned translucent black,
giving a window view of her wings'
black and orange beauty.

Then, as we held our breath, some unnamed energy
seemed to leave, stopping the progress of change,
as if the thought of opening became too much to bear.

Still cocooned weeks past her time, my fool's hope
chose to lay her gently on the ground
under the raspberry bush, well past the time of ripe berries,

but no god rose from her shroud,
and I wished to think no more of her, or birthdays,
and what they signify.

Still, I kept wondering, as the days shortened,
if I'd somehow wronged her,
in trying to direct her metamorphosis,

as winter barged in with its egotistical force,
its snow and wind burying
the shell from whence a soul had fled.

At Eight

Our French teacher,
Monsieur Sachs,
made me sit
beneath his desk,
a punishment for a lisp
I couldn't master.

He'd also stroll with me,
in circles round the room,
his pinkie finger
entwined with mine,

as all the class looked on.

He made me repeat,
Vous êtes beau, and intone
Monsieur Sachs,
Monsieur Sachs,
Monsieur Sachs,
a kind of song
I'd have to sing
in front of everyone.

A shy child, perhaps
he meant to draw me out.
But every Sunday night,
kneeling by my bed,
I prayed he'd fall
and break his leg.

I never told my mom,
or dad, or anyone.
It just seemed my fate,
at eight, to learn to hate.

Laura Foley's books are *WTF*, *Night Ringing*, *Joy Street*, *The Glass Tree*, *Mapping the Fourth Dimension* and *Syringa*. Her work has won the Common Good Books poetry contest, the Joe Gouveia Outermost Poetry Contest, The Atlanta Review Grand Prize, Foreword Review Poetry Prize and others. Her poems have appeared widely in journals and magazines including *Valparaiso Poetry Review*, *DMQ*, *Room Magazine*, *McClellan Poetry Prize Website*, *Pittsburgh Poetry Review*, *Bellevue Literary Review*, in the anthologies, *Aesthetica Creative Writing*, *In the Arms of Words: Poems for Disaster Relief*, *Ice Cream Poems*, *Roads Taken: Contemporary Vermont Poets*, *Not My President*, *an anthology of Dissent*, and many others.