



## CapeWomenOnline - Where Cape Women Shine

Your local venue for the women of Cape Cod to share their ideas, experiences and resources while inspiring each other in their life's journey

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## Literary Women



Summer 2013

### Many Happy Returns

by Susan Berlin

The husband sees nothing  
wrong with it, the painting presented  
to him as a wedding gift, by his mother.  
He claims to like the piece  
despite the skewed perspective,  
the blunt, chopped strokes  
and everything bright red. Red trees,  
all trunk and no leaves. Short, jabbed lines  
to define the bark. Not a bird nor bud  
on a single fractured branch.  
Red Grass, red sky.

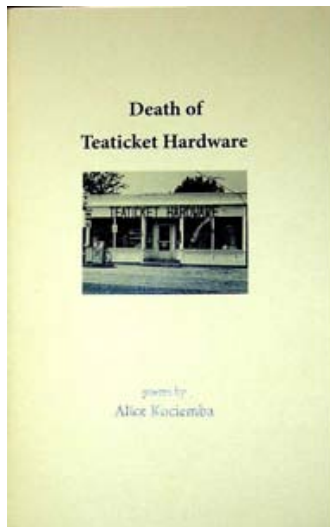
As for that viscous abscess  
In the middle----a puddle, a pool, some kind  
of reservoir----filled with red squiggles: his  
mother's signature, artfully disguised.

Tonight, his wife lowers her book, watches  
as he lumbers out of bed, tilts for the 100th time  
the heavy gilt frame, a quarter-inch to the right,  
steps back, adjusts it again---a bit  
up and to the left---before he eases it  
off the hook that's good for up to 50 lbs.,  
places the thing face down on the bed  
and tightens, by hand, the wire.



Susan Berlin's poems have been published in *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *Asheville Poetry Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *Georgetown Review*, *Harvard Review*, *Mudfish*, *New Millennium Writings*, and *Ploughshares*, among others.

Nominated for The Pushcart Prize and twice a finalist for the National Poetry Series, she was awarded First Prize in the 16th Annual Galway Kinnell Poetry Contest by the Rhode Island Council and has received an International Publication Prize and an International Merit Award from Atlanta Review. She lives in Yarmouth Port.



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## Snapshots of Sippewissett Marsh

by Alice Kociemba

I. Late Afternoon, Labor Day

a lone swimmer parts  
a pewter sea

a cormorant on the rocks  
wings apart, drying off

a large, speckled gull flies off with a Birkenstock  
drops it against a rock, like a clam shell

thunder clouds churn  
the surf's froth to meringue

a dad, "the tide's going out."  
his son, "is it because it's tired"

undeterred, like the dominant bird,  
the dad's pre-occupied with packing up

## II. Light, Early October

Nothing grey remains----  
days of rain and fog dissolve.  
Now the sky's bleached blue,  
with a thin milk skim of clouds.  
Shafts of light pierce the tips of red-gold grass  
and spear the lapping shore  
till every stone and shell begs to be held.  
The water's warmth seductive----  
toe-by-toe in for one last dip  
into Eros' salty shiver.

## III. An Early Turning

We used to say "that one's sick,"  
that maple, across the marsh,  
but somehow I think it smart,  
prepared for the hunkering down----  
the first to sport a copper crown,  
before the extra blanket,  
and the furnace turned on,  
before the faithless flocks depart,  
and greedy night chomps an extra bite  
from submissive light.  
Or am I wrong to applaud  
such surrender?



Alice Kociemba's new chapbook, *Death of Teaticket Hardware* (2011) celebrates memory, people and place. The title poem won an International Merit Award from the *Atlanta Review* (2008). Active in the poetry community on Cape Cod and beyond, she is a member of the Massachusetts Poetry Festival's Advisory Board, and *What's Falmouth Reading?*, a community-wide read, which chose *The Favorite Poems Project* in 2009. She founded *Calliope-Poetry Readings* at West Falmouth Library in 2008.

Alice is working on her first collections of poems, *Seizure and Other Disorders*. Her recent poems have or will be appear in *Atlanta Review*, *Main Street Rag*, *Roanoke Review*, and *Salamander*. A frequent featured poet, she has been described as "the best storyteller, I have ever heard," and she has featured or been a panelist at all four Massachusetts Poetry Festivals, and has opened for Robert Pinsky at the Brookline Poetry Series. She is a member of the Jamaica Pond Poets, a weekly collaborative workshop.

Alice Kociemba is also Director of the [Calliope Poetry Series](#)