



The
Place
We
Begin

Poems by

Hope McLeod

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2012

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to the editors of *RAVN Anthology* where two of these poems appear: “Blue Lake Bean Seeds” and “The Doctor Says.”

Special thanks to:

Catherine Lange for graphics and editing; Jeanie Tomasko and Harriet Brown for further edits; Bruce and Yazmin Bowers, Bruce Dethlefsen, Jan Chronister, Liis Bjornson, Dorine Damm, Dimitri Rimsky, Docey Lewis, Ken Stewart, my writing groups both past and present, Marilyn Wilson, Myra Ehnert, and Barb Snyder for listening to my poems, making comments and encouraging me to keep going.

This book is supported in part by a grant from the Chequamegon Bay Arts Council and the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin. Matching funds provided by Myra Ehnert.

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ISBN 978-0-692-03984-7

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For Myra,
Who looks for loons,
cocoon and Sand Hill Cranes
wherever she can find them

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The Place We Begin

When you reach the end
it's just the beginning.
Tie a knot to it
so the beads don't fall off.
Turn your empty glass over
and wait
for sorrow to come and go.
It's O.K. to feel sorry for yourself
for a few minutes
then close the lid to your mother's coffin
and go change the baby's diapers.

This is the place we begin.

One-Eyed Dreamer

One eye opens a crack to the sun
while the other one sleeps.

Thrushes and robins fly in
singing anthems to worms

threads of morning tug at my dream-sleeves
throw balls of yarn into the yard

yarn for nests
yarn for poems
yarn for the one-eyed dreamer.

Eat This Poem

Eat this poem
like the Ancient Egyptians did
one sacred scroll a day
soaked in a crock of wine
and chewed mindfully
until all symptoms disappear.

Allow these letters
to curl around your broken heart
its “Cs” and “Gs”
lock stitch your opposing sides together
the “Os” and “Qs”
gather your disparate thoughts
and unpleasant memories
into a unified whole—
a satchel you can fling over your shoulders
and open only when you need to.

Not that I am wise
nor would I say this to just anyone
but I like you
and you look pale as papyrus today.
So eat this poem
and let me know what happens.
If you feel any better
call me in the morning
and I will eat my words too.

Apple Winds

Apple winds are blowing.
Summer tumbles to the ground
still juicy and warm in my hand

still wiggling my toes in the sand
though geese move through clouds
through my tears,
for what, I don't know.

It happens this time of year
sweet cider from the old mill
reflections on the lake
like tea leaves in a cup.

No sign of what to do

apples on the porch
waiting to be made into pies.

Blue Lake Bean Seeds

My dog would have died for green beans
especially the foot long
no-human-could-possibly-digest variety.
I'd hurl those green elf-shoes over the garden gate
and she'd devour them by the dozens.
It's only fitting she become a bean bush herself.
I placed her ashes in the soil
with a sprinkling of Blue Lake Bean seeds
and months later marvel
at how her green ears perk up
when I speak of my day
how her many tails wag
as I pour water over her dry bones.



About the Author

Hope McLeod is a Staff Writer for *The Bayfield County Journal* in Ashland, Wisconsin, and a contributing writer to *Wisconsin Trails Magazine*, *Home Education*, and *Verse Wisconsin*. Prior to becoming a full-time writer, Hope worked professionally as a singer/songwriter, musician, and teacher and has three recordings of her original music. She lives in Washburn, Wisconsin, with her husband Bruce Bowers, also a musician. They have one daughter, Yazmin Bowers, an emerging singer/songwriter and pianist.

“Poetry is the pause I take at the end of a long sentence,” says Hope. Though she’s been writing poems since she was ten, this is her first chapbook.

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“Start a new fire, another story (*Crows Around the Cook Stove*) and listen to music in Hope McLeod’s poems in her premiere chapbook, *The Place We Begin*. Let the poems tug at your dream-sleeves (*One-Eyed Dreamer*). Hold the songs in your hand (*Love Cry*) ...a gush of tiny stars (*Hummingbird Moths*) and cross over the dark waters between worlds (*Sunning on Rocks*). Don’t let this moon get away.”

—Bruce Dethlefsen

Wisconsin Poet Laureate (2011–2012)

“From small green worms to chance meetings with bears, from crows to zucchinis, from realities to whimsies, Hope writes all sorts of things ‘back into the world.’ With her finely tuned ear for rhythm, she offers us careful studies of the ordinary and zoom-lens glimpses into love’s intimate corners. It’s been my pleasure to work with Hope and her poems. Pull up a cozy living room and a wood fire, the place to begin is here.”

—Jeanie Tomasko, Poet

Book design and cover image by Catherine Lange

