



No Shape Bends the River So Long

Monica Berlin, Beth Marzoni

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WINNER OF THE NEW MEASURE POETRY PRIZE, Selected by CAROLYN FORCHÉ | Free Verse Editions, edited by Jon Thompson | "What to make of this grand experiment over months and miles of river by two poets, not one-Monica Berlin and Beth Marzoni-plus whatever third spirit they've invented together? Like music from the 8th century written by Anonymous, that haunting ubiquitous voice, these poems feel unsettlingly interchangeable, keep coming like the country's longest river dream-documented here in a rich rush, dense with repetition and sorrow by poets who 'think like a glacier or a stone, sand . . . years / like consistent rain.' The Mississippi never had better companions or more devoted ones, save Mark Twain perhaps, or more to the point, his troubled, star-crossed Huck. The sense of human and nonhuman history, even prehistory stuns, keeps bothering this shared-solitary work. 'Wake to any weather & know that / long ago there also was.' I'll take that as rare solace." -MARIANNE BORUCH | "NO SHAPE BENDS THE RIVER SO LONG is a book of atmospheric turbulence and diminishing water levels, inner weather forecasts, dark and light, friendship, the stillness in waiting rooms, a river's traffic-or what poets Monica Berlin and Beth Marzoni, a So & So in dialogue with us and each other, call 'the rush of alongside & what is.' In the zig-zag process of traveling the Mississippi River Valley, together they navigate with beauty and resonance the 'hours of drought, of waiting, the new low- / watermarks of the lakes,' the trees 'that sound like rain & morning.' This is eco-poetry, it is intimate conversation, it is meditation, the turning inward, the swinging back out from mind to world around the bend. I deeply respect and admire this book for its love of place; its tumbling, digressive progress; its glints of joy and thoughts too deep for tears." -NANCY EIMERS | MONICA BERLIN & BETH MARZONI's collaborations have been published in Boston Review, Colorado Review, Denver Quarterly, New Orleans Review, DIAGRAM, Better: Culture & Lit, Meridian, TYPO, Midwestern Gothic, Vela, & Water~Stone Review.

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