

## Two Poems by Marilyn Kallet

### Forget the Silk

Forget the silk of poppies, their unrelenting red. I could  
take you to forgetting, lick amnesia across your lashes,  
make you forget half-learned love, forget your name  
and the word for blood, caress you with my breasts until you  
spill your hair over me and we're lost in a silkstorm.  
Forget the drained desert stars, hold me fast as constellations  
you painted on your ceiling as a boy, unfold me like a true map,  
wander my sleepless byways. Taste the dark-skinned girl  
you used to love coming toward you without sorrow,  
surprise the man you mourned hiding blues inside  
his hair—we'd be the bridge drumming one world into  
another, riding our breaths. Over, under, all around,  
crooning our own night chant, finger cries.  
Could you bear forgetting this?

*first published in How to Get Heat Without Fire, New Millenium Writings, 1996.*

## Ravishing

Madame says she's ravished by the tortoise.

I'm jealous.

I can see why Madame is *ravie*. *La*

*Tortue* with her Cutco beak  
crawls out when Madame coos,  
chomps *pissenlit* and crawls  
back under rock.

I too was ravished by a beast  
aeons ago.

Last year. The floating hair,  
Dark eyes. Hélas, then  
Beatrice showed  
and short-circuited  
my ravishing.

Madame says she is moved  
by intelligent animals,

Me too.

I admire *Tortue's* indifference  
to my face.  
She doesn't need to be petted,  
unlike the dog down the road  
who stops by my gate ten times a day.

Madame Tortue circles

The garden edge.

Fourteen years, she'll never  
unlatch the garden gate.

She traps herself

under a flowerpot  
never knowing how near  
the Vita Nuova waits  
next door.

A thrill when she

rounds the corner  
again and circulates

Like Wallace Stevens  
slo-mo in the sun.

I am almost ravished  
by the tortoise,  
but hold back just  
a toe  
in case you come  
round the bend  
with a sunny bouquet  
and a slow hand.

**Bio:**

**Marilyn Kallet** is the author of 16 books including *The Love That Moves Me*, poetry by Black Widow Press. She has translated Paul Eluard's *Last Love Poems (Derniers poèmes d'amour)*, Benjamin Péret's *The Big Game (Le grand jeu)*, and with Darren Jackson and J. Bradford Anderson has co-translated Chantal Bizzini's *Disenchanted City (La Vie Désenchantée)*, due out in February, 2015. Her work has appeared in hundreds of literary magazines, including *Plume, Connotation, Blue Lyra Review, Still: The Journal, New Letters, Prairie Schooner*.

Dr. Kallet directs the Creative Writing Program at the University of Tennessee, where she is Nancy Moore Goslee Professor of English. In 2005, she was inducted into the East Tennessee Literary Hall of Fame in poetry. She has performed her work on campuses and in theaters across the United States, as well as in Poland and in Auvillar, France, where she leads a poetry workshop each spring for VCCA-France. For information about the workshop: <http://www.vcca.com/main/node/572>. For more about her work: <http://marilynkallet.com/>