



Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg (1959 -)



One of the most active poets in Kansas is Lawrencian Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg. She conducts writing workshops and readings across the state. She teaches poetry to journal keepers, songwriters, lower-income youth and adults, and cancer survivors. As a professor in a low-residency college, she also reaches students across the nation. Further, she is a founder of the transformative language arts curriculum, which promotes spoken and sung language as “a tool for personal and community transformation.” She participates in international events and has a global perspective on poem-making.

Mirriam-Goldberg’s verse plumbs the depths of consciousness. In “Spring Song” she situates the poem between waking and dream states. The poem also hovers between night and day; between winter and summer; and between imagination and reality. Sky, gravity, trees, birds, and stones are elements of nature—and so also are moments like sudden waking from a dream and love. The ending image of a stone, solid yet carrying an internal crack for years, is yet another paradox. What seems solid may shatter at any moment. This is fertile ground for the poet, as she explores the renewal of springtime.

SPRING SONG

***What it is to wake at night not watered down
in overdrawn voices from the day, to see the space
and not figure in the space, to fall backwards
in a dream and realize it’s a dream?***

***What waits, wet as fire, on the end of the line?
The rushing of wings, the billowing of thunderheads,
the crashing of car into lamp post, the slivering of bark
from tree, the waking suddenly for no reason?***

***Meanwhile, insects reproduce themselves like breath,
Birds loosen the sky with flight,
stratus clouds streak across the moon,
kisses stop, and stones break apart
so easily that it’s clear they’ve been cracked inside
for a long time. Each life a transference of water.
Each act just a way to move light around.
Even knowing this, why can’t the heart stop asking?***

Education: Caryn Mirriam-Goldberg was raised in Brooklyn and Manalapan, New Jersey. She came to the Midwest to attend the University of Missouri (B.A. History, 1985) and the University of Kansas (M.A. in Creative Writing 1988 and Ph.D. in English, 1992).

Career: Mirriam-Goldberg’s books of poetry are *Lot’s Wife* (Woodley 2000); *Animals in the House* (Woodley 2004) and *Reading the Body* (Mammoth 2004). Since 1996 she has been a professor at Goddard College in Vermont, working with the Individualized MA program. She founded and coordinated the Transformative Language Arts conference and Goddard’s degree emphasis. She also has written books for teenagers, *Write Where You Are* and a biography of Sandra Cisneros. Her blog is carynmirriamgoldberg.blogspot.com. Her website is www.writewhereyouare.org.