

Art-to-Art Journal Palette

Two Sisters Bookmart

When I was asked why I wrote *Water Girl*, I realized I had never really thought to put it down on paper. Probably, like many writers, I wrote without considering the poems a collection. Each one was a little story about my journey through a time period in which the rights and roles of women were changing," says Donna Rice of the Allen County, Ohio region on her first ever book scheduled to be released by *Finishing Line Press* of Georgetown, Kentucky in late June 2011.



Prose book roars like a tsunami

Author Rice as well as to name a few like, E.E. Cummings, Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman, Emily Bronte and Maya Angelou are not your 'standard' authors because they have been endowed the ability to convey experiences, theirs and others. They write what the heart feels, using true compositional techniques, weaving the words, whether to the point or in a suggestive language form; thusly, giving visibility to the eyes and a doorway to their souls.

In my review, I found "*Water Girl*" did not necessarily confine me to inside the box by cultural and social or biological makeup because of specific women issues, yet it is a collection of writings where I believe the scenery, including the topics can be emotionally

felt metaphorically by men. In the most part, Poet Rice weaves her words in an unclothed fashion that pulls a reader of prose inside a woman's soul, one drenching with desires of Should I or Should I not."

In her childhood, Donna's form of "had-to" expression was written "...on any blank page I could find," she voiced, and when she became an adult, "I believed that I actually had something to say" because of the validations by her closely-knit supporters, including her belief "...that my feelings of anger, inequality, and suppression were felt and experienced by many women. It occurred to me that exposing my struggle to cope could have an enlightening and healing affect for others."

Raised on the farm in Indian



Lake-Logan County, Ohio, Donna also made her debut during the early 40s at the start of the crop-picking season, who became the first child of **Donald G.** and **Eleanor Jane Antram** as well as rightfully took her place among siblings **Mary Lou, Connie, Joseph** and **Donald C.** Some of her so-far travels and other accomplishments beyond the farm included graduating from *Ohio University* and *Ohio State University*, becoming a teacher; marriage to her high school sweetheart David, which the union created a son and two daughters, all who are highly accomplished in the medical and business sectors.

Again and moreover author Rice wrote "**Water Girl**" because she believed "Young women might better understand why we struggled." At the other end of the age spectrum, she knows now "Older women might appreciate their own strength and courage."

However and thusly giving more of a gender validation, I think of PBS **Garrison Keillor**. I can hear him voice the lines of one of the many poems by author Rice which not only roars softly like an audio tsunami, but also I see clearly the mental images, those that confirm my understanding and the circumstances so called weaker sex had to embrace. Better yet and in the author's own words, "Water Girl" is about Donna's will "...to legitimize women's feelings and perceptions..." and granting "...them to accept that they are right and justified."

Concluding, I am soaring with confidence this prose book will also become a recommended reading in the higher educational arenas, and in my conversation with the author at the time of this writing, although the historical research could not be confirmed, but it was indicated her genealogical roots could possibly be linked to **Abraham Lincoln**, who visited relatives in Ohio before he became the 16th US President. Therefore and knowing this author who is as honest as Abe, my book is coming signed and ordered direct from her via email – rdavedonna@aol.com or see other ways at: www.finishinglinepress.com.

By Ben Rayman

Other reviews:

Will Wells writes: "This collection captures the essence of a vanishing rural American landscape and culture. Closely observed and richly detailed, Donna Rice's poems are elegies for the family farm and farmer. The reader is treated to memorable forays to the barn loft or the sheep fold captured like a Walker Evans photograph. Her rendering of the rural mid-west is infused with issues of gender, memory, and the will to preserve what remains."

Poet **Ruth Naylor** writes: "Donna Rice writes as one who has come to understand her power as a woman as well as one who knows the power of words. Cultivating the soil of childhood memory and adult experience, she harvests poems that feed the soul. She has slipped the confining skin of self-doubt, and courageously pens her sad songs and sings aloud her dream-songs."

Author of *Riders on the Storm* **Susan Streeter Carpenter** writes: "Welcome Water Girl, Donna Rice's first collection of poetry. In lines clear, tender, and redolent with the wealth of women's experience, Rice's poems evoke Northern Ohio farm country; changing seasons, rows of corn, wild flowers, flocks of birds, heavy labor, moments of anger, horror, grief, and ecstasy, incandescence and deep darkness. Rice lived through an era and a culture that devalued women; she came of age angry and struggling to value herself. "There is a difference between being self-less and unselfish," she writes. These poems seem to have come from a process of re-assessing and transforming the most powerful moments of daily life."