

The poems in Katherine Soniat's new book of poems, *A Raft, A Boat, A Bridge*, reverberate with personal and global threnodies, apocalyptic alarms, romantic philippics, and marital myths, all of which, like "the dust and air" Cassandra is given to see through, Soniat also divines with stunning verbal velocity. One wonders at times if she is even aware of where's she going exactly in her runic narratives and lyrics, but this wonder is less of a distraction than an engaged curiosity about her muse who leaps most freely from trope to image to proclamation to naming. Like the wounded wolf in her poem "Swan Song," Soniat "runs from no one," and in staying put in the midst of her wild place where she no doubt feels threatened by those who are "out to leash the wolves," she emits a powerful howl, as in these final lines from "Swan Song":

The sky's striated and booming (hearts used to be like that).

Winter moon, another celestial rock above the slaughter.

Stray hand, such a playful toy to toss, lifeline exposed to the elements.

Morsel map of the world.

Soniat travels at a speed quicker than light in *A Raft, A Boat, A Bridge*, arriving at her conclusions, observations, and ideas in a psychic manner that defies speed altogether for its sudden, utterly unexpected revelations. And yet, she still manages somehow to make sense, a sense that often depends more on affective understanding than any logical coherence. These poems are haunted and haunting, decrying a deep personal loss and loneliness whose provenance dates back to her childhood and whose shadow adumbrates her entire life. "Most times I think I lived alone since birth/ as each reassembled house fills with those who never know I leave." Soniat's wisdom lies in her trust of her utterance that emanates from a voice, as Walt Whitman claimed in his poem "Assurances," that has "another voice." This voice in Soniat is deeply chthonic and creaturely in its most human keening, both frightening and enlightening.

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