

Inspiration of Poetry



Photograph by Emily Isaacson

April is poetry month

When poet Emily Isaacson writes, she is the weaver of an intricate tapestry of both themes of society and nature, an observer of humanity's plight, and casual commentator on the science of the written word.

Brilliant and polished, her readings imitate something of the human heartbeat in the urban world, where consumerism and advertising at times define our values. But poetry is needed, she argues, to return us to an earlier time when communication was defined by non-violence and encouragement. She is always expanding her vocabulary and that of others, just by constantly learning new words and their meanings . . . she often has a blog where she publishes her posts, painstakingly, one at a time for her audience while her books await publication. One of the prolific Canadian poets, she has now published over eighteen hundred poems. She has written poetry not only from the traditional Christian perspective, but also from the perspective of modern Christian community, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, atheism, and pantheism.

Isaacson is an admirer of C.S. Lewis, and owns a copy of his first poetry book, *Dymer*, a book of narrative poetry which she believes is as significant to our time as Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and one of only twelve still in print. But her dark nights of the soul have a lot in

common with Lewis, who struggled first to become a known poet before his writings took off as theologian and fellow at Oxford.

For Isaacson's career the way is not uncertain. First published at thirteen years old, she has been writing for over 25 years. She joined the Canadian Federation of poet in 2008 as an affiliate, and served for three years on the board of the Mission Arts Council. Her books have been published by Tate publishing and Potter's House Press. For her, postmodern writing is not rebellion against modernism or the modern world and its conveniences, although she has preferred to say as far away from them as possible. It is an understanding of an older time, and she feels it is essential that her writing in contemporary times validate their experience. She relinquishes in her work all but the deepest issues of humanity and our purpose on this planet, womanhood and birth, childhood and cultivation. The trials of public life have not marred her general sense of balance.

Isaacson has given voice to the art of poetry in a new way by her salty and euphoric public reading, her riveting and ethereal use of words, and her practical and down to earth perspective. She is a reckoning force in the Fraser Valley landscape where she has made her home, founding the Emily Isaacson Institute in 2005 (now called the Wild Lily Institute). Isaacson was recently nominated for an Arty award to the Abbotsford Arts Council in April 2013.

As one of the directors of the Poets Potpourri Society (now the Fraser Valley Poets Society) in Abbotsford, she encourages people to do something different this month: try reading poetry daily, buying a poetry book, or coming out to hear live poetry, including featured reader Emily Isaacson at her next two public readings.

Isaacson will be the featured reader at live coffee shop poetry at the Sumas Mountain Coffee Co. in Abbotsford, on Thursday April 25, 2013 from 3-5 PM, reading from her collection *House of Rain*. Free admission.