Zwicky," H. L. Hix describes a writing course that draws from Zwicky's arguments for analytic *and* lyric philosophy. He advocates sagely for both skill and oracularity in poetry writing, and for conceiving of poetry as something that goes beyond "literature."

In "The Back-Stretched Connection," coeditor Mark Dickinson notes that Zwicky keeps "the details of her personal life and the stories behind her ideas away from the public." With minimal deviation from this desire for privacy, and with sensitivity, *Lyric Ecology* still manages to bring Jan-Zwicky-the-Person to life. Two contributors (a former teacher and a former student) excel. Christopher Wiseman's "The Unforgettable Teenager" recounts Zwicky's presence in the first-ever creative writing class at the University of Calgary. Charles Barbour studied philosophy with Zwicky in her early days of teaching. In his aptly titled "Echoes of the Ardent Voice," Barbour shares the profound influence Zwicky has had on his thinking and life.

In *Lyric Ecology,* where resonance in content and structure is palpable, there are also lamentable silences. One I will simply note: except for a brief quote in the editors' preface, Don McKay does not speak. Another silence I will expand upon. In 2003, JackPine Press published a book in limited edition—*Contemplation and Resistance: A Conversation*—a correspondence-based exchange between Zwicky and Tim Lilburn. It long ago sold out. Comprising 11.5 double leaves, this short volume is a distillation of Zwicky/Lilburn thinking that is itself a coherent, resonant whole. *Lyric Ecology* includes less than half (the first) of *Contemplation and Resistance.* Whether this omission is owing to reprint rights issues or to an editorial decision is unclear. Whatever the case, it creates a rare point of dissonance in the book and prolongs limited accessibility to an important piece of Zwicky's (and Lilburn's) work.

But these misses are minor, relative to the overall success of *Lyric Ecology*. Reading it reminded me of a colleague's comment to a university class on the fundamentals of thinking and writing about literature. Specifically about collections of poetry, Jeremy Leiper said, "Don't imagine that when you close the book, nothing's going on. Those poems continue talking with one another." Likewise, in Lyric Ecology there ensues a conversation between its twenty-six contributors: appreciative, yes, but also informed, inspired, stimulating, good-willed (if not always in accord), new ideas seeding and forming. And now a twenty-seventh person has joined the conversation in my personal copy of *Lyric Ecology*, which is pencilled with commentary, questions, and the graphic equivalents of furrowed brow, excitement and insight.

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One Crow Sorrow by **LISA MARTIN-DEMOOR**

Brindle and Glass, 2008 $18.95

Reviewed by **GINA GRANTER**

The children's rhyme from which Lisa Martin-DeMoor's debut full-length poetry collection takes its name illustrates the symbolic value that humans seek from the natural world. The first two lines of the counting rhyme form the epigraph of *One Crow Sorrow*: "One crow sorrow / two crows joy." In this simple children's verse, the human penchant for binaries, the swing between one entity and its opposite, is revealed. This is an appropriate opening to a work that explores the dualisms of life and death, presence and absence, love and grief, and the

tenuous divisions between them. These explorations are tied inextricably with the natural world to which humans have always turned for meaning and metaphor. While the symbolism of crows in the counting rhyme underscores the arbitrariness of humans' compulsion to see order in nature, under Martin-DeMoor's care the relationships between emotions, anatomy, animals, and landscape are intuitive, painful, and beautiful. This collection of poems is an elegant and visceral meditation on love, loss, and the simultaneous terror and beauty of mortality.

"Memory at its finest lacks corroboration," begins one of the collection's strongest poems, "Durum wheat." The negotiation between the actual event and the one seated in the memory is one with which the speaker of this poem struggles, preferring the latter for its intermingling of the human heart and imagination with the past. Recollections move from past to present tense, as in "Things to remember," in which the speaker grapples with the notion of faith. Later, in other poems, she asks, "What does it matter if I call it grief / or memory?" and calls grief her "imaginary friend," the thing which cannot be seen by others. Yet grief is so physical in these poems as well. Loss, the speaker says, "is a substance," and the heart gives material presence to mourning. In "Phase change," in which the transition of the seasons challenges the grieving speaker, the heart is "like the rain barrel / you found split open last year / when the rain inside it froze." In "Heart," it is a caged animal holding the speaker hostage, causing her "to wear a groove in the living room carpet" while staying up all night. Grooves, imprints, and scars are recurring images in these poems as well, whether they are on a landscape, on a human body, or in the memory. The Rockies are a scar on the land; the pacing of a praying father wears a spot in the floor; an airplane-shaped scar on a twin sister's chin causes the speaker in "Blood" to wonder "where these scars might take us." In Martin-DeMoor's landscapes of grief, scars give presence to absence: the evidence of the event long past, or the loss literally marked by the movement of the mourner.

For these poems, the human body is a landscape or ecosystem, even a universe. In "Evicted," the speaker's father is turned out from his own body, destroyed from the inside by an "other will" that is stronger than his own. The sparse, one-word line "Cowbird" is a rich metaphor for the invading disease, naming the parasitic bird that lays its eggs in other birds' nests and watches its young flourish while those of the host starve. In "Pathology," the speaker's mother's disease is described as a "cosmos inside," "whole orchards" of cells growing and replicating zealously. The strangely beautiful images are disrupted by the presence of "Marines," "the neurosurgeon," and "lasers," whose presence suggest the institutional and technological means of destroying the overabundance of life threatening the life of the mother. These poems, which appear early in the collection, remind the reader that disease is a part of nature, the struggle between two entities for survival in an ecosystem. This does not mean that the speaker understands or forgives the lives that took those of her parents, or accepts her parents' deaths as simply the natural order of things, but there is a presence of wonder in her contemplation of these morbid events that reveals astounding maturity and reflection.

Readers of Martin-DeMoor's collection will not leave the final pages of this book feeling grim: there is an overwhelming emphasis on love which is, ultimately, the root of grief. Love underscores the impermanence of human life, the persistence of memory, and the fierce beauty of the ephemeral. About her mother's love, the speaker in "Summer after" says, "Her love was as fleeting as moth-wings in July, as unending / as hill-side in Ireland at dusk where I long to find / her preserved footprint, in dust. A fine, five-leafed clover." This beautiful paradox is a perfect

emblem of a poetry collection that warrants multiple readings and attention to future work by this poet.

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Out of the Earth: Ecocritical Readings of Irish Texts edited by **CHRISTINE CUSICK**

Cork UP, 39 euros.

Reviewed by **HARRY VANDERVLIST**

Colonized, then sentimentalized and commodified perhaps as much as any place on earth can be, Ireland has of course been written, painted, and sung about in manifold ways. What the essays collected in *Out of the Earth* begin to demonstrate is just how much Irish writing of the last century or so has been "strongly oriented to nature," as John Elder puts it in his introduction. This volume's eleven chapters span a wide range of Irish writing: fiction from George Moore to Roddy Doyle and Edna O'Brien, poetry from Michael Longley to Paula Meehan, and drama from Synge's *Riders to the Sea* to McDonagh's *The Cripple of Inismaan*. Eóin Flannery contributes a study of colonial and touristic travel posters. A concluding interview with Tim Robinson widens the volume's scope to include this fascinating figure whose work combines cartography, local history, and prose in works such as *The Stones of Aran* and *Connemara: Listening to the Wind*. The material discussed may be Irish, but most of the contributors are American, writing mainly from colleges and state universities (does this say anything about the kinds of places where ecocritical writing has found the warmest welcome so far?)

Several of the essays connect ecocritical with postcolonial themes in relation to the history of representations of Ireland. As John Elder describes it, such "affinities between ecocritical concerns and current approaches in postcolonial studies" suggest "a literary turning in which the appreciation of more lyrical forms of 'nature writing' has been balanced by an emphasis on environmental justice." From George Moore's "untilled fields" in the years after the famine to the more recent spectre of industrial pollution and suburban sprawl in the "Celtic Tiger" years, the land is always at stake in these discussions.

Three of the essays on more recent writing articulate a strong sense of interconnectedness, or dissolution of boundaries, between the human and the nonhuman. Donna Potts suggests that "while Michael Longley's emphasis on interconnectedness obviously suggests an alternative to Northern Ireland's legacy of sectarian violence, his frequent references to biological interconnectedness suggest that along with his need to traverse social, cultural and political boundaries is the need to challenge the boundaries traditionally posited between self and nature." Karen O'Brien argues that "the representational and structural strategies in *The Cripple of Inismaan* activate interconnectedness in a way that resonates with the promise of strengthening ecological bonds between the human and nonhuman world and of promoting an overall engagement with issues of environmental sustainability and equilibrium." Finally, in "'Becoming Animal' in the novels of Edna O'Brien," Maureen O'Connor writes that in her late novels "O'Brien not only confronts but transcends what can be a problematic 'feminisation' of the 'other' by fusing man, woman and animal in the narratives' most affecting moments of grace, however fleeting they prove to be."

Even though ecocriticism now has at least a thirty-year history, occasionally an essay in this collection slips back into terminologies and usages which are being redefined and analyzed