

Review By Charles P. Ries

BLOOD SOAKED DRESSES

By: Gloria Mindock
Ibbetson Street Press
25 School Street
Somerville, MA 02143
Price: \$13.50 / 62 Pages / 45 Poems
ISBN: 978-4303-1034-1

In her third book of poetry, "Blood Soaked Dresses" Gloria Mindock raises horror to transcendent allegory. With language that has a lyrical soft quality to it, her new book of poetry becomes the perfect vehicle to express moments (sad, horrific, and glorious) that are set in El Salvador during its civil war from 1980 to 1992. When we see the massacre of innocents continuing in Kenya, Somalia, Darfur, Iraq, Afghanistan – the list becomes painfully endless. Her book becomes a timeless poetic prayer for peace.

Her book of poetry is about the most painful of subjects. Through Mindock's love of this culture, its people, words, and many flavors, she creates transcendent metaphor after transcendent metaphor. Here are a few cherry-picked from her poem, "Seeing Is Only a Flawed Secret": "A long shadow filling my body", "I have conversation with the abyss"; "My weary mind is just a symbol." "The sky is gray today. / healing itself back to blue." "Jesus, rearrange your schedule. / Go, show me your lips. Make your kiss / a compass so I know where to go." "I look out the window and feel / like a fool. / Everyone carries on with no ears. / Such motionless supervision – a crime!" Amazing - and these lines and phrases are taken from just one of her 45 poems.

Mindock's success with "Blood Soaked Dresses" is all the more remarkable given how very hard it is to write about horror. If a poet can enter into this world, speak to this blackness and create a wisp of hope, then the poet is by demonstration is a great writer indeed.