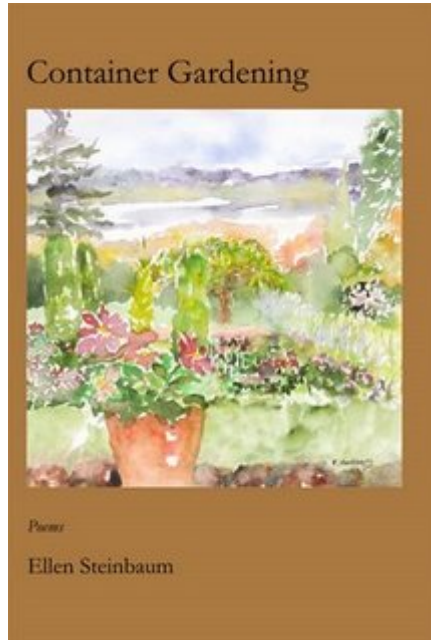


Container Gardening. Ellen Steinbaum.



Container Gardening. Ellen Steinbaum. (Custom Words PO BOX 541106 Cincinnati, Ohio 45254) <http://www.custom-words.com>)

Ellen Steinbaum's poetry collection "Container Gardening" infuses meaning into all the things we carry in this life. It is a long and lyrical grocery list that evokes a late, beloved aunt, the seminal years of the poet's mother, and the way time creeps up on a person with a flick of an eye. In her poem "Time Travel" Steinbaum weeds through the trappings of the Philadelphia apartment of a recently deceased aunt, and in turn weeds through her own history:

"I am leaving Philadelphia behind:
an apartment closed, silent,
empty, some furniture
given to Goodwill: the last
chairs from the last apartment
of the last of my three aunts.
I am the owner now
Of paintings I know by heart,

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china from family dinners in old photographs.
Scarves that fill my drawers
once dressed my dolls.”

And in the poem “Order” Steinbaum compares the painstaking order of her current life—to the wild and joyous disorder of a life with a husband and kids in close proximity:

“I always know where
the tape measure is now,
a pen, a safety pin, my keys.
Not like the years when
shoes tumbled uncoupled
on the floor and every closet
could spill secrets.

Now each day is folded,
neatly stacked in silent drawers
and nothing moves an inch
to left or right.
in an instant I can find
the tape measure.”

Ellen Steinbaum writes a popular column about writers and the writing life in *The Boston Globe*. In this book she is the subject, and her life yields rich rewards.

Doug Holder/Ibbetson Update