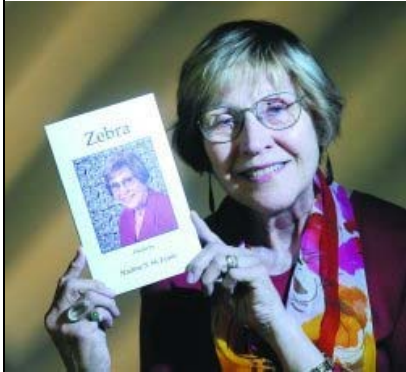


Zebra Poems by Nadine S. St. Louis



Zebra
Poems by
Nadine S. St. Louis
Marsh River Editions
Marshfield WI

Copyright © 2008
by Nadine S. St. Louis

Review by Zvi A. Sesling

When Israeli poet Abba Kovner was dying of cancer he wrote a book of poems entitled Sloan-Kettering named after the hospital in New York where he was being treated. Kovner was a resistance fighter in the Vilna Ghetto in World War II. In Israel he had to live through a series of wars.

His last battle was the one he couldn't win. Yet he left a memorable book of poems with section titles such as "The Corridor," "Rooms, Half-Drugged," "Honored Visitors," etc. and a final poem "An ending unfinished."

In a book of poems entitled Zebra, Nadine St. Louis, who is a cancer survivor, writes to tell about her emotions, her treatment and her reactions. Her poem titles also reveal much about her experiences with names such as "Diagnostic," "Magnetic Resonance," "On Cutting Ladies in Two," "Post-Op" and others.

However, it is "Scar" that sums up her book because it is not only about the physical scar, it is about the mental anguish of having to look at the result of the operation, having others see it and dealing internally with the knowledge of being a survivor – for how long? Take the opening paragraph:

"I'm thinking of getting a tattoo.
The nearly half-yard sine wave

Wilderness House Literary Review 4/1

across my waistline fairly cries out
for adornment.”

Or let the final stanza sink in:

“Let these sharp lines sign a return
to innocence, fruit of a new earth, color
of sky, the undreamed place we come
when we have confronted the beast in the field,
surviving.”

In the final and title poem, “Zebra” St. Louis provides the attributes of zebras to life. It may take more than one reading of this poem to associate zebras with surviving cancer which is unlike the rest of poems which are clear and to the point.

Reading this volume, one is happy Nadine St. Louis has survived and grateful she has been able to put her thoughts into this chapbook.