

## Wilderness House Literary Review 5/4

### Elegiac: Footnotes to Rilke's Duino Elegies by Elaine Terranova



Elegiac: Footnotes to Rilke's Duino Elegies  
Elaine Terranova  
Cervena Barva Press  
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*Review by Irene Koronas*

Within this chapbook of longing, grief finds release, "It's true, life reminds us of death and time, isn't that how life comes to you..." The poems take flight, yet, grounded in history, they swim on the surface of the wide blue ocean, yet, the poems sink into our psyche:

"...I was cold  
I was in the iceberg of myself.  
wringing my hands,  
washing my face without water.  
Having forgotten each rhyming wish.  
Every word is a word of praise,  
even a curse, a word of praise.  
Utter it, and you are a beggar..."

By the end of the reading the reader realizes it is a journey influenced by Rilke and completely the poet's own experiences and her references become personal tributes, the mythology of carnival, angels, female deities:

..."The soft contours of an old photo.  
Fine lines etched into a hill.  
Motion stops. Smile locked  
before it is imagined. A trip you didn't take,  
bags you let go by without claiming.  
There was the window, the line of light  
that came between so we were separate.  
What dawn pulled away, leaving us  
to the normal operations of the world..."

Clearly this is the writing of an accomplished poet, with much to impart. Cervena Barva Press gives us the most current writers, internationally as well as our local voices. This is one of the chapbooks that implores us to invest in our small presses.