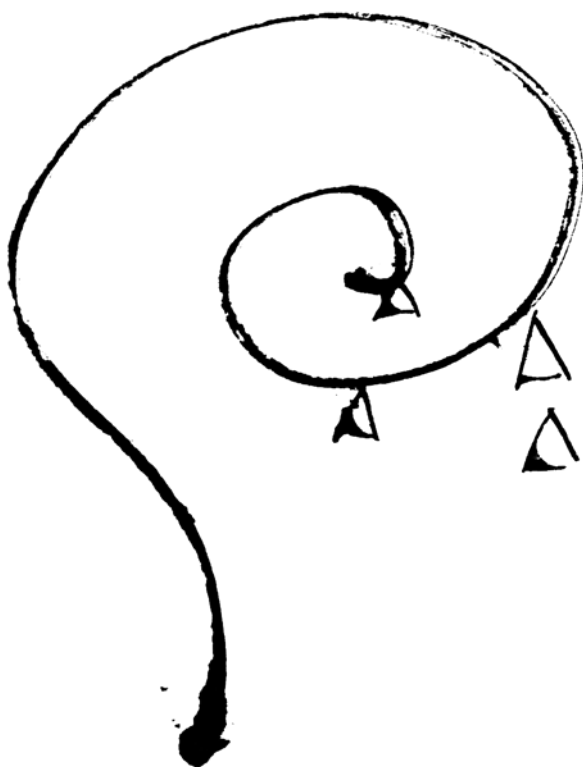
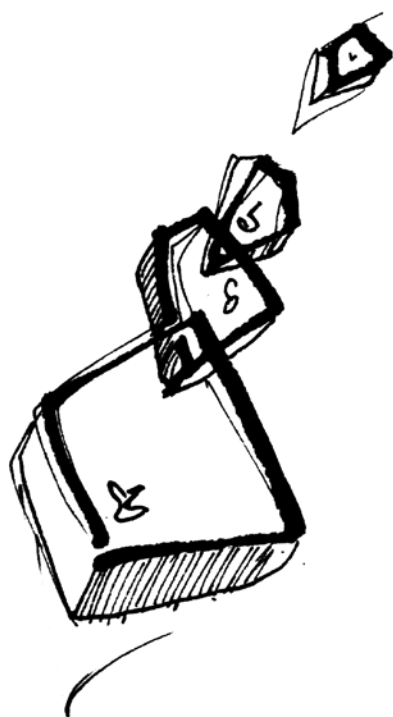


# THREE POEMS

NORMA KASSIRER



一、



# **T H R E E P O E M S**

**NORMA KASSIRER**

The Poetry Collection is proud to celebrate National Poetry Month with this publication of Norma Kassirer's *Three Poems*, the fifth in a series featuring the work of poets living in Buffalo.

2009	Bernhard Frank
2010	Ansie Baird
2011	Jorge Guitart
2012	Ross Runfola

Poems and images © 2013 by Susan Kassirer.

Covers and inside cover images: Norma Kassirer, from "The 1985 Notebook."

## The Round Table

The round table of fine mahogany  
gave birth, in a glory of mathematical  
impulse,  
to its own imagined chairs,  
the table having sat quiet for long years  
in a room  
next to the passageway  
inhabited by a young god  
forever at dance  
in a field of evening primrose.

He entered the room  
on a pirouette,  
sat down in one of the chairs  
and said, "What's for dinner?"  
More magic? worried one chair  
to another.  
No one knew what to do—  
how to geometrize a kitchen,  
a stove, a cook.

## **The annoying persistence of origami once it is introduced to polite society**

A rage, a dark snow of commas fell over the page,  
so tightly spaced the page was black,  
a sort of complacent, glowing hell,  
except in areas where a rogue comma  
has stationed itself and left a space for hope.  
The story, therefore,  
was gradually enabled to move in tiny arenas  
to a martial music,  
which increased as it summoned  
adherents to its cause.  
Unfortunately, a period of periods began...  
(Human cells, the writer mused,  
in the time provided,  
are folded like origami.)  
What does this mean, if anything?  
Well, it must mean something—  
algebraic, perhaps, or telegraphic or geometric—  
precision, precision,  
and the limits of my vision  
are performing a slow dance  
on my left wrist.

## **Bring your own rattrap cheese**

The eventuating sunset would not be enough—  
we'd seen better, more pink, more extravagant—  
the way the color entered the water  
to reveal the secret pavement  
of the lake bottom.

The gull perched,  
pink on a pink rock  
all through the process,  
whether from rapture  
or simple birdliness  
no one was sure.  
Drink the beer. Pass the cheese.  
Now toast the lesser sunset.





## About Norma Kassirer

Norma Kassirer, writer and artist, is best known for her two novels for children, *Magic Elizabeth* (The Viking Press, 1966) and *The Doll Snatchers* (The Viking Press, 1969). *Magic Elizabeth* has been called a modern classic, and has been reprinted many times, currently appearing in newspapers throughout the world through Breakfast Serials serialized stories.

Subsequent publications include *The Hidden Wife*, a collection of stories with artwork by Willyum Rowe (Shuffaloff Press, 1991), the story cycle *Milly* (Buffalo Ochre Papers, 2008), and her novella *Katzenjammered* (BlazeVOX Books, 2010). Her short fiction and poetry have been published in various magazines, including *Angle of Repose*, *Between C & D*, *Blatant Artifice*, *MSS*, *Son's Ear*, *TEXTS*, *Yellow Field*, and elsewhere. Her poems, which tend toward the narrative, often cross expectations of genre and engage with the lyric.

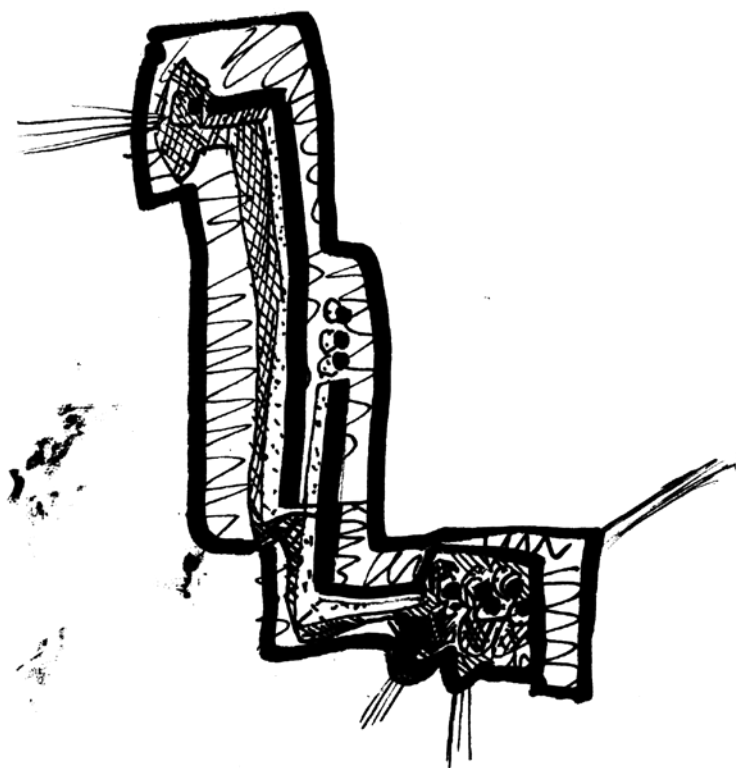
Also a painter, Norma exhibited her paintings at Betty's Restaurant on Virginia Street and at the Western New York Book Arts Collaborative for the book release of *Katzenjammered*. She also made stunning and thoroughly original handmade artist's books, one of which is owned by the Albright-Knox Art Gallery. Norma often painted at the MollyOlga studio, and participated in teaching classes there and through the Poets in the Schools program. She and her husband Earle were long involved with Hallwalls from its inception, with Norma at one time having painted murals on the ceiling of the old space on Essex.

Between the selection of these poems for inclusion in the Poetry Collection's Three Poems series and their publication, the author passed away at 89. May these poems mark her passing, and her longstanding contributions to the cultural life of the Buffalo community.

Published in an edition of 500 copies.

The Poetry Collection  
of the University Libraries  
Buffalo, NY | March 2013  
[library.buffalo.edu/pl](http://library.buffalo.edu/pl)

 **University at Buffalo** *The State University of New York*



"Sì, ma no"

