

Introducing Katharine Towers and Kris Johnson

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Katharine Towers and Kris Johnson are very different poets. Towers is English, with an ear always open to French; Johnson is from the Pacific northwest, steeped in the work of Annie Dillard, Roethke and James Wright. Where the two meet, I think, is at the point where musicality encounters the sense of post-religious mystery, in the context of woods and birdlife (Towers) and rivers and mountains (Johnson). To the extent that the term still has meaning, both are nature poets, sharing an intense but underplayed apprehension of time and place. Towers 'reads' music into the texture of her poems, while Johnson tilts an ostensibly plainer conversational style into fresh dramatic life. If I were asked to suggest where the true vitality of contemporary poetry might be found, these are two of the poets I would strongly recommend.