

LAUREN BACALL SHARES A LIMOUSINE

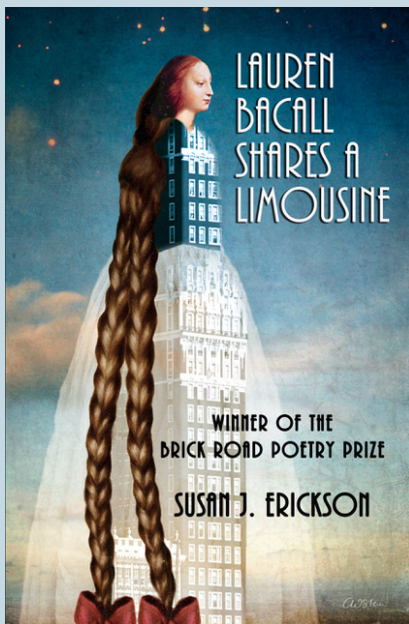
a new poetry collection by Susan J. Erickson, winner of the Brick Road Poetry Prize

“Erickson’s sharp sense of play and imagination is her signature on these poems. Smart and accessible, these poems satisfy our desire for stories.”

— Kelli Russell Agodon, author of *Hourglass Museum* and *The Daily Poet*

“Clever, haunting, voluptuous, and nervy.”

— Sandra Beasley, author of
I was the Jukebox and *Count the Waves*



With masterful craft and a firecracker wit, Susan J. Erickson’s *Lauren Bacall Shares a Limousine* explores the lives of women across centuries and continents. Employing narrators that range from Lady Godiva and Lucy Audubon to Janis Joplin and Marilyn Monroe, the poems in this collection give voice to women both well known and obscured by history. Here are poems that give voice to the critical moments of women’s lives and dramatize the silence that many women still face today.

Poems from this Brick Road Poetry Prize-winning collection have appeared in journals including *2River View*, *Crab Creek Review*, *Museum of Americana*, *The Fourth River*, *The James Franco Review*, and *The Tishman Review*, as well as in such anthologies as *Till The Tide: An Anthology of Mermaid Poetry*.

Erickson grew up in the Midwest and earned her B.S. and M.S. at the University of Minnesota. She now lives in Bellingham, Washington, where she also works as a visual artist; among her recent projects is a collage series depicting the women featured in *Lauren Bacall Shares a Limousine*. An engaged member of the arts community, Erickson is among the founders of the Sue C. Boynton Poetry Walk and Contest in Whatcom County, Washington.

Erickson is the author of one previous chapbook, *The Art of Departure* (Egress Studio Press). *Lauren Bacall Shares a Limousine* is her debut full-length collection of poetry. Learn more at susanjerickson.com.

“I’m reminded how profoundly and efficiently a poem can express human experience, and that women’s experiences, never doubt it, are boundless.”

— Kathleen Flenniken, author of *Plume*



Click or scan to hear a sample reading by Susan J. Erickson.

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Q&A with Poet Susan J. Erickson

“I like to explore the intersection of the small moments of a life with the larger forces of an individual’s life and with the culture as a whole. I see a certain irreverent humor in life and want to express that in what I write.” – SJE

Q: While Lauren Bacall gets top billing in your title, this book explores a wide range of women as subjects. How did you select the historical and imagined women about whom you’re writing, and what binds them all together?

A: Some of the selections were by happenstance. For example, I toured Taliesin, Frank Lloyd Wright’s home, and learned



author photo: Diane Pady

about the murder of his mistress, Mamah Borthwick Cheney in a fire at the home. That prompted poems in the voices of Mamah and Kitty Wright, Frank’s wife. Because my husband and I are bird watchers I read a biography of John James Audubon and got interested in his wife, Lucy. But when I look at the collection as a whole, I see that the women that I wanted to write about and attempt to speak for were ones that dared to live “above nerve” which is an expression borrowed from the Emily Dickinson lines: “If your Nerve, deny you—Go above your Nerve—”

Q: What stylistic and formal influences are at work in this collection?

A: I play with poetic forms (the abcedarian, ballad, haibun and pantoum) in the book. For me, traditional form imposes controls, but also pushes the poem in unexpected directions. I also borrow everyday forms such as the menu, field notes, a magazine article and computer technology as poetic springboards. I believe story and imagination are the dominant influences in the collection.

Q: In these poems, you mix wit and humor with serious subject matter. How do you strike a balance between the two?

A: This collection reflects how I see the world—that real life is a crazy mixture of the serious and the humorous. I’m not sure I have managed a balance. The reader gets to decide.

Q: What do you hope that readers will take away from the experience of this collection?

A: I hope readers realize that their voices are important. The last lines in the poem “Rapunzel Brings Her Women’s Studies Class to the Tower” read: “Every day/new towers of darkness rise. Do I need to say/your voices are searchlights that can sweep the horizon/to reveal fault lines and illuminate passage?” ❄️
