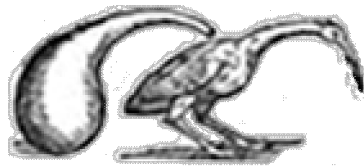


Segue

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RONDA BROATCH



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CONTENTS

Woman Emerges from Mud	4
Moon Shell Meditation	5
About the Author	6

Woman Emerges from Mud

A chip of sandstone in your palm,
you find a willing seam,
slide a blade until the seam widens.
Separate the layers—inside
a whorl of red and ochre.

Other stones disclose slender stems,
or nuts of trees long extinct.
Trace the serrated edges of leaves,
tiny bones of a life trapped
when mud rushed over restless earth.

Imagine yourself
caught in an instant—

picking berries, tracking antelope,
pursued by bear or boar,
when terra thunders underfoot.
The warning roar, darkening sky.
Sun swallowed in dust.

How your body burns
after the world ceases its chatter.

Imagine opening your dormant life,
layers flaking away.
You, rescued by a knife
slicing into stone, your first gasp
the astonishing brightness of night.

Moon Shell Meditation

Because one in the hand looks like a breast,
its round brown nipple centered on a spiral.

Because tracing it with your fingertip
makes your heart race.

Because its long grey foot
has left it behind.

Because it reminds you of an ear—
hold it to yours.

Because even broken, your finger cannot
discover a heart,

and somewhere deep inside
it has a heart.

Because you can't see in.

Because, on the shelf, a spider
lives in it.

Because it keeps its secrets, never sleeps,
points its tiny eye to the moon.

About the Author

Ronda Broatch is the author of *Some Other Eden*, (Finishing Line Press, 2005), and *Shedding Our Skins*, (forthcoming from Finishing Line Press, 2008). Twice nominated for the Pushcart Prize, and for Best of the Web, 2007, Ronda is the recipient of the 2005 Kay Snow Poetry Award, 2006 WPA William Stafford Award, and 2007 Artist Trust GAP Grant. Her work appeared recently on *Verse Daily*.

Ronda Broatch on the Web:

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