



Photo by Barbara Hodgen

In **The Museum of Lost Wings**, Renée Ashley realizes, with one of her alter egos, "That she has no wings. That she too must fly," and she does. Not quite so isolate as Emily Dickinson, Ashley explores the similarly deep territory of the self, or selves: the poems alternate between first, second, and third persons as the poet, much like Dickinson, "builds a house / of many rooms and doors and . . . passes through the walls." Haunted and held by ghosts, grief, memory, trouble, the body itself, "the burden / inside the bone," she at the same time moves beyond body, in search of "something gauzy, something joy might / be eager to inhabit." The joy, for the reader, is often in the language: these are poems in which all words count, and many surprise. Tight, resonant, lyrical, edgy, marked by paradox and reversals of linguistic expectation, they are poems that might themselves be called, in the words of one of Ashley's titles, "Such Threads of Light as Exist in Deep Pools."

—*Martha Collins, Final Judge*

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RENÉE ASHLEY

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POEMS



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