



Everytime a Knot is Undone, a God is Released: Collected and New Poems 1974-2011

Barbara Chase-Riboud

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The long breath of Barbara Chase-Riboud's poems recalls poets of the antique world we know only from fragments, like Sappho. And yet here is a disquieting and sumptuous contemporary voice that seems to gather up antiquity and modernity with equal fervor and scorn. These poems are sexually charged, possessed of a courtly disdain and a strange nobility that seems to well up from below to be self-creating and unlike the verse of any other poet writing today.

Certainly one secret to this work is that Chase-Riboud's poems are informed by her epic, polished bronze sculptures, as her sculptures are informed by her narrative fiction, and her fiction by her poems. The idea of the Renaissance Man is almost a cliché, but how often do we get to see what it means for an artist to be a Renaissance Woman? Chase-Riboud has been a major in sculpture, fiction, and poetry for close to half a century: selling over a million copies of her path-breaking novel Sally Hemings in the late '70s, winning the Carl Sandburg Award for her second collection of poems in the late '80s, and now, nearly thirty years later, on the heels of a major retrospective of her sculpture at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Berkeley Art Museum, here is Everytime a Knot is Undone, a God is Released, her first new and collected volume of verse.

From the Hardcover edition.



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