

Featured Poet: Jill Jones



Photo: Annette Willis

Transnational Literature is delighted to be featuring the work of renowned poet and academic, Jill Jones. Jones' most recent poetry collections include *Brink* (Five Islands Press), *Breaking the Days* (Whitmore Press) which was shortlisted for the 2017 Kenneth Slessor Prize, *The Beautiful Anxiety* (Puncher & Wattmann) which won the 2015 Victorian Premiers' Literary Award for Poetry, and a chapbook, *The Leaves Are My Sisters* (Little Windows Press). Her work has featured in recent anthologies including *The Poet's Quest for God* (Eyewear Publishing), *Contemporary Australian Poetry* (Puncher & Wattmann), and *Contemporary Australian Feminist Poetry* (Hunter Publishers). In late 2014 she was poet-in-residence at Stockholm University. She is a member of the J.M. Coetzee Centre for Creative Practice, University of Adelaide.

Jill has kindly allowed us to include three previously unpublished 'transnational' poems in this edition of the journal. The following is an insight into the process that produced the poems:

These three poems are part of a longer series of works I wrote when I was living overseas, for five months over 2014-15, primarily in Sweden, but undertaking some travel to other parts of Europe. Because I was living and working in suburban Stockholm, I wanted to write poems that were not typical travel poems. I wanted to catch what it was like for me living everyday life in Stockholm, or elsewhere (eg, laundromats in Paris), albeit of course as a foreigner, that is, a stranger. For instance, I was living in a suburb which was right next to a big hill (Hammarbybacken), used as a ski slope in winter. And that seemed, to Antipoedian me, a touch unusual for a suburb close to a CBD,

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but obviously not to your average Stockholmer or, at least, those who used the slope day and night during winter. I could see this hill every morning from my apartment window, so the poem's subtitle is a modest, even tongue-in-cheek salute to Hokusai's '100 View of Mt Fuji' paintings. The poem moves through other 'views' of the city that I experienced over the months: the train interchange at Slussen, the paid dog walkers, the ever-present candles in windows, the beauty of the harbour and inlet waters of the Stockholm archipelago, kids playing with joyful abandon in snow (although I had decided, quickly, that actual snow is miserable, wet and dangerous, much safer looked at than moved through). However, one of these poems, 'Arctic Express', could be regarded as a more standard 'travel' poem, in that it is about a journey, in this case, via the Arctic Express which we boarded in Stockholm and alighted in Abisko, north of the Arctic Circle in Lapland. Although it is, more than the other two here and a number of others I wrote, about travelling through a landscape new to the poem's narrator, I hope it also presents a sense of ordinary life, domestic and industrial, taking place along the route as well, along with the fact the travellers in the poem are actually rather unwell (indeed, we were and should not really have been undertaking this journey at all). In summary, I hope that a sense of both cultural and bodily displacements within the ordinary, or commonplaces within the new or strange, has worked its way into these poems

Jill Jones