

For Carlye

You've seen the signs.

The two weird sisters.

The whisperer. The one who smiles.

The cosseted lips of snow pressed
to the greener one's ear.

The confidences. The mystery.

The smile, that enigma of hundreds
of tiny muscles, the only flesh
beside the tongue

to pass between your teeth.

What is it about girlhood?

What is it about grace and goodness?

What is it that has been lost
beneath the dipped brim of the hat?

Wouldn't you like to know? says the green one.

Would you like me to say more? asks the white one.

Behold, we shall tell you a mystery.

We are sisters of the fairer elements.

Our atoms a giddy dance of sugars
and seasons.



Apparitions, maybe.

Leviathans, oh, perhaps.

The seedlings of wildfires, most assuredly.

You say gaiety is not in our longterm destiny
for we Cassandras rarely meet with
conclusions of cascading tickertape,
understanding nods, vindications,
and baskets of whiskered things.
Instead, we get farmhouse ex machina.

We get water from the Lake of Fire.
We get old.

But that is the price of knowing
the confidences of those older and
more far-seeing than ourselves.

We cannot help what we are,
nor would we if we could.
Certain knowledge is

a pretty mercury on the tongue,
a tickle in the ear
passed from sister to sister

behind hands
beneath hat brims.
Terrible, sometimes.
Felicitous, occasionally.
Regretted, seldom.
We are what we are,
and we are usually right.

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Amélie Frank received her degree in English with a Creative Writing Emphasis from U.C. Irvine, where she studied poetry with Pulitzer Prize winner Charles Wright, fiction with Oakley Hall, and literature with Robert Peters. In 1994, she founded The Sacred Beverage Press with poet Matthew Niblock. Together, they produced the acclaimed literary journal *Blue Satellite*, and published books by FrancEyE, Erica Erdman, local legends The Carma Burns, Elyn Maybe, Nelson Gary, Jeanette Marie Clough, Rick Lupert, Richard Osborn Hood, Elliott Baker, and anthologies for the Valley Contemporary Poets. Under her publishing banner Cassowary Press, she published books by Rick Lupert, Carlye Archibeque, and Matthew Niblock. Ms. Frank is the author of five poetry collections: *A Resilient Heart and Other Visceral Comforts* (1992), *Flame and Loss of Breath* (1996, Laguna Poets' Series #6(!), Inevitable Press), *Drink Me* (co-authored with Matthew Niblock, 1997, VCP Press), *Bird Interpretations* (co-authored with Michael Paul, 1998, Cassowary Press), and *Doing Time on Planet Billy Bob* (1996, Laguna Poets' Series #175(!), Inevitable Press). Her publication credits include: *The Rag*, *LummoX Journal*, *ArtLife*, the Tebot Bach anthology *So Luminous the Wildflowers*, *Caffeine*, *Dance of the Iguana*, *Sicviceverse*, *Sabado Gigante*, *Red DanceFloor, its, 51%*, the anthology *Scream When You Burn* (Incommunicado Press), *The Moment*, and *The New University*. She is the first person to have been featured twice in the same year (within a month, no less) on the *Poetry Super Highway* website and served as a judge for that site's first annual poetry contest. She also served as a judge in the 1994 MTV Spoken Word competition to select the poet to represent Los Angeles at the Lollapalooza Festival. Her literary reviews have appeared in *Sicviceverse* and *NEXT...magazines* as well as her own reviews column, *Amélie's Retro Hell*. She occasionally participates in panels on small press, poetry publishing, and has run the Wednesday Night Poetry Workshop at Beyond Baroque. Not only has Ms. Frank featured at most of the venues in Southern California, including Beyond Baroque, the Los Angeles County Museum, MOMA, the Los Angeles Poetry Festival, and the Los Angeles Library's Newer Poets Series, she has hosted three reading series of her own: Poetry at the Hot House, Poetry in Exile, and Killer Poetry (all three with poet Richard Modiano). She still hosts special events at Beyond Baroque. She has served as a Co-director of the Valley Contemporary Poets, is a member of the Board of Trustees of Beyond Baroque, and was the Events and Marketing Coordinator for Red Hen Press. In 2002, she organized The Big Picture, the historic gathering of nearly 300 poets at Beyond Baroque for a documentary photograph. In 2003, she was awarded the Spirit of Venice Award for coordinating a reading at the Abbot Kinney Festival. In 2004, she served on the arts grants awards committee for the City of Ventura. In 2005, she took a long nap. When not busy with her life in the Los Angeles Poetry Community, Ms. Frank is a trained lyric mezzo soprano, a terrifying cake decorator, a true crime buff, and runs film actor Billy Bob Thornton's Official Website and Newsgroup. Her biography appears in *Who's Who of American Women* and *Who's Who in America*.

