



## **Prodigal: New and Selected Poems, 1976 to 2014**

*Linda Gregerson*

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**Prodigal: New and Selected Poems, 1976 to 2014** Linda Gregerson

**In her first book of collected work, prize-winning poet Linda Gregerson mines nearly forty years of poetry, bringing us a full range of her talents.**

Ten new poems introduce *Prodigal*, followed by fifty poems, culled from Gregerson's five collections, that range broadly in subject from class in America to our world's ravaged environment to the wonders of parenthood to the intersection of science and art to the passion of the Roman gods, and beyond. This selection reinforces Gregerson's standing as "one of poetry's mavens . . . whose poetics seek truth through the precise apprehension of the beautiful while never denying the importance of rationality" (*Chicago Tribune*).

A brilliant stylist, known for her formal experiments as well as her perfected lines, Gregerson is a poet of great vision. Here, the growth of her art and the breadth of her interests offer a snapshot of a major poet's intellect in the midst of her career.

## Prodigal: New and Selected Poems, 1976 to 2014 Details

Date : Published September 1st 2015 by Mariner Books

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Author : Linda Gregerson

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# From Reader Review Prodigal: New and Selected Poems, 1976 to 2014 for online ebook

**Steven Andersson says**

I had read enough of Gregerson's poems in The New Yorker to want this 2015 collection. She is schooled in classical literature, which Dan Chiasson points out in his New Yorker review of 8/31/2015.

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**Jenny (Reading Envy) says**

*I received a copy of this from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.*

I had not had a chance to read Linda Gregerson's poetry before, but I will definitely look for her in the future. Her poems cut deep and do not apologize. I felt the poems composed new for this collection were the best but I found a few standouts in earlier sections. It is one thing to feel a strong emotion, to have a startling reaction. To then turn around and put it into words is a skill so few people have. It is the kind of poetry most definitely reflecting on life, the kind that makes me want to know more about the poet and her experiences.

Some favorites:

The Wrath of Juno

The Dolphins ("You think these powers began with you?")

And Sometimes ("The part that makes us human more elusive than we'd thought.")

Maudlin; Or, the Magdalen's Tears

("If faith is a tree that sorrow grows  
and women, repentant or not, are swamps,

a man who comes for solace here  
will be up to his knees and slow

getting out.")

For My Father, Who Would Rather Stay Home

Prodigal

("lashes sticky with sunlight")

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**D.A. says**

There's something extraordinary about the way Gregerson strings a long, luscious sentence across these

earnestly fractured lines, like a bolt of silk draped on a marble torso, fitting and unfitting itself in flowing descent:

If the lines are not lovely in two  
dimensions,  
they'll never be lovely in three,

he said. The skirt will not hang right,  
the actress  
will stumble and blur.

The actress is a living presence in these poems; Gregerson's remarkable diction and Shakespearean training underpin a poetry of soliloquy, astute, assured and graceful. Her reimagined myths and her contemporary meditations on theology are quite generous and moving in their quiet disclosures:

the pewter with its lovely  
reluctance to shine. As though

the given world had given us  
a second chance.

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### **Eric says**

Good, modern ecopoetry. Is that a word? Did I just create a new word?!

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### **Nick says**

Goodreads win. Will read and review once received.

Before receiving this book I had not had the opportunity to read any of this authors work. After getting the chance I was so impressed. I have never been a huge poetry fan, but this was exceptional. After reading one poem I kept having to keep reading until the book was over. I can definitely say I enjoyed the way the author had with words. A very good read.

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### **Jared says**

3.8/5

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## **T.L. Cooper says**

Prodigal New and Selected Poems: 1976-2014 by Linda Gregerson pushes the reader to think through use of creative and provocative language. Many poems that feel simple on the surface hold an underlying complexity. The poems reminded me that often speaking in seemingly straightforward language can push readers to think beyond the words presented. There's a reverence and an irreverence woven through the poems in ways that connect the unconnected demonstrating just how connected the world truly is. Prodigal lives up to its name in that it examines how reckless and wasteful human beings can truly be but also demonstrates there is hope to find our way again.

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## **Patti K says**

The first collected volume of new and fifty old selected poems by Gregerson was published in 2015. An excellent work that was an introduction for me to her work. A wide range of topic with verbal dexterity throughout. An intellectual style full of disjunctive lines full of subjunctive clauses, but she still makes her poems eloquently flow. She tenderly writes of her daughter's disability in "Grammatical Mood." One of my favorites. Also, intensely about Roman gods and myths, environmental damage, her Norwegian ancestors and faith or the lack thereof. Very rewarding.

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## **Maddie says**

*The gods in their mercy once / could turn / a frightened girl to  
water, or a shamed one to a tree / but they / no longer seem  
to take our troubles much / to heart.*

I would like to thank Netgalley for providing me with this ARC.

I adore poetry from the depths of my heart, but I have mainly experienced reading the works of authors in fragments or individually, very rarely in one collected form. However, this book was one of the most gorgeous things I've ever experienced.

Linda Gregerson has written something incredible with Prodigal. Her subjects range from mythology to childhood memories, her friends, her parents, urban life and commentary on our contemporary society.

The mythological aspects are the most artful and dazzling part of the work – subtle at some points, outright brilliant at others. She gives a voice to tales unexplored, weaving them artfully with circumstances from today and modern views, resulting in observations that comment all too well on the society we live in. She writes *Last night too – do all / of our stories begin with rape?—the girl / came back / from the dead somehow* and then takes it further, noting how little everything has changed with the poem being named 'Ceres Lamenting.'

The atmosphere she creates with the layout of her poems, the words dripping from one line to the next, only served to emphasise the essence of each work; furthermore, each poem seems to carry onto the next, seamlessly weaving the ideas together and creating a feeling in my chest that left me hollow.

A lot of her titles come from artwork and when I realised this, I began to look up the pieces of art; the poems took on an all new level, managing to simultaneously write about the artwork but also capture something of the poet's own thoughts and experiences.

I felt as though some of her prose pieces were weaker than her poetry; not interesting with their ideas or imaginative with her word choice and the way she strung them together. While this resulted in them being less captivating than some of her other pieces, they still remained well written.

To me, Linda Gregerson writes with precision, allowing each word to ring out in clarity. To me, she manages to touch on the nostalgia of the past – both of her childhood and that of the ancients, writing on Mary Magdalen with words such as *The mirror refuses / the candle, you see. And tears on another's behalf / are not / the mirrors he's pleased to regard.* With her words, she creates a deep ache that settles in my bones and I want to thank her for them.

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## **J says**

Poetry is a subjective art. Either you learn to appreciate it or you spend a lot of time scratching your head trying to figure it out. I found that with Gregerson's collection, I was doing a bit of both. She has a somewhat interesting style, preferring a free verse form mixed with two and three line stanzas for much of the work. This is not the poetry of your classics class, that's for sure. Gregerson also seems to pull inspiration from a lot of sources, both personal life and already published works but I felt that sometimes the context was not always clear. As far as the collection goes, this is probably a good introduction to Linda Gregerson's work even if I didn't get half of what I was reading. There's plenty of emotion and the sense of modern poetry throughout so, depending on your tastes and understanding, *Prodigal* is likely to be a bit h

Note: ARC received via Amazon Vine in exchange for review.

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## **Richard Anderson says**

Some of these inscrutable, all wonderfully allusive.

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## **Chrissa says**

These were amazing, although my overall impression was that they were sad and that the title itself did not imply a return I think I expected when I picked up this collection.

Gregerson brings together images and fragments of Biblical verse, the odd everyday juxtaposition of the stories that we hear and what repeats in our head--each poem feels like a thought, interrupted, supported, continued and then gone, which gives the entire collection (I admit to reading it too fast) an exhaustion of

experience. Too much, too real. And still, you can't help slipping into the next poem because, well, you're still living in the wordspace.

I will be reading this again.

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**Hristina says**

**Copy received through NetGalley**

Such a wonderful collection. This poetry deals with such important and heavy subjects, and it's written so beautifully. Mrs. Gregerson has left me rethinking everything I have ever experienced. I still can't process what I just read. I honestly haven't been this speechless.

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