

BOOKREVIEWS

The Poetry of Ingeborg Carsten-Miller: A Review Essay

Ingeborg Carsten-Miller has been writing poetry for many years. In the last decade or so she has gathered the fruits of her labor together and published them in a series of booklets as follows: *Nordlichter* (1994); *Ingeborg at L'Enfant Plaza* (1997); *Ingeborg in Beltsville* (1997); *Ingeborg at St. Elmo* (1999); *Ingeborg in Grand Rapids* (2001); *All Christmas* (2001); *15 Years in the Federal Poet* (2002); *Die roten Schuhe* (2002); *Last Words* (2003) [all volumes available from the author at Carmill Press, 3413 Canberra Street, Silver Spring, Maryland].

The poems themselves number in the hundreds and date back at least as far as 1984. Carsten-Miller writes in both English and German with equal verve and takes her inspiration from a wide variety of experi-

ences. Two topics stand out in particular—her love for her Pommeranian homeland and her passion for life, especially as it evinces itself in relationships with family and friends. Although it does not appear as if the poet consciously intends the physical shape of each poem to be significant, it is worthy of note that the often short lines centered successively on the page tend to underscore the degree to which Carsten-Miller is able to capture some of life's more poignant moments in a few descriptive phrases. Although there are lighthearted poems in each collection, those in the latest volume are often more serious. Carsten-Miller seems to handle the more thought-provoking topics as adeptly as she does the more carefree themes. One can only hope that the title of the most recent volume does not fulfill itself and that we will hear more from the poetic voice of Ingeborg Carsten-Miller.

— Randall P. Donaldson
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overleaf: A poem by Carsten-Miller which seems particularly appropriate for the *Report*

We — the Immigrants

With dreams we come, with highest expectations.

For centuries we have come
to this New World we call:
"The Land of Gold,"
this Land of Endless Opportunities.

We are no different now
from those who did arrive
hundreds of years ago — those first
to look for better lives,
fleeing from hunger, wars, and persecution.

This world is full of never ending sorrow.
There is no end to suffering,
bondage, and suppression, but
here we come in hope and desperation,
the immigrants from everywhere.

We immigrants — we keep on coming
from all corners of the world,
from Europe, Asia, Africa, all continents,
searching for freedom,
looking for our own land.

"Bring me the unfortunate, the willing,"
America says,
America, the rich, the open-hearted.

And we have come bringing our skills,
tilling the savage soil to grow
wheat, rye, corn, beets, cabbage, and potatoes,
we helped form this land
in science, business, and the arts.

So, sing your song,
all you German-American immigrants here in America,
sing of your ambitions, your dreams, and desires.
Sing of freedom, equality, and liberty
for ever.

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Ingeborg Carsten-Miller