

LOST YOUTHS

**Audible ache****Home of Sudden Service**

By Elizabeth Bachinsky

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78 pages, \$16.95

The Valley Girl (and by extension Valley Boy) of late '70s/early '80s pop-culture fame was a bubble-headed rich kid with a small vocabulary and a big wallet. In her second book of poetry, Elizabeth Bachinsky invites you into a world of modern valley girls and boys: misfits, vandals and lost souls drift across a fractured landscape that begins in the "cold suburban cartography" of the Fraser Valley and ends in the "*Je ne parle pas/le français* Montreal," a journey of great emotional distances and wandering despair.

Revealing her technical skill, Bachinsky hammers through poetic forms, employing a toolbox of gritty language and nail-tight sentences that elucidate the human condition. Her sonnets, villanelles and glosas glitter with contemporary references to youth, loss and a sense of place so thick that it can swallow you whole. "Where I'm from boys and girls/fuck young, wait for the snow to go then lay/their bodies out beneath the pines to play/at *petit mal* (or is that *petit mort*?)..."

The voices in this book are many, but their plaintive song is a consistent cocktail of violence and tenderness. Cars, cocks and coffee shops figure prominently, as do missing and murdered youth, such as in the terrifying depiction of a killing-in-progress in "Wolf Lake." Nearly all of us can relate to the narrator of "Near Miss" who knows "...how it is to have a place/inhabit the body," to be "at the mercy of location." The closing poem "Drive" follows two sisters on a road trip across Canada, weaving together 15 sonnets into a tapestry of overlapping lines and sentiments that circle back to the beginning of their touching journey.

Bachinsky is a poet of growing proficiency with an ear to the ground of 21st-century culture. *Home of Sudden Service* grips you with yearning from the first verse to the last, producing a nearly audible ache for a raw and recognizable past.

—**Belinda Bruce**