cial change in a world of peril. She shows us how motherhood and social activism are related (DiQuinzio) to the discourse of maternalism in the context of patriarchal eighteenth century France. *Milk Fever* represents the timeless nature of our history as mothers and wise women.

Work Cited

DiQuinzio, Patrice. "The Politics of Mothers' Movement in the United States." *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering* 8.1,2 (2006): 55-71.

Birth of the Uncool: Poems

Madeline Walker.
Bradford, ON: Demeter Press, 2014.

REVIEWED BY LAURIE KRUK

Madeline Walker is one "Uncool" Mama … a woman who has articulated her own struggles of maturation—through addiction, loss, divorce, the perils of parenting "different" children—in the form of moving, eloquent and funny poems. Now in her fifties, she urges us, in the title poem of her collection, *Birth of the Uncool,* to embrace aging artfully: "Undress and sit for me, darling, your / beautiful body, strong, aged, puckered, / built to last…. / Who cares if the kids see these / sketches tacked on our huge bulletin boards? / Who gives a shit what anybody / thinks of our uncool abandon?" (105). But before the speaker—arguably closely identified with the writer—arrives at this place of joyful abandon, she takes us through four stages which culminate in the new growth announced in her title section: "Recovery, Youth, Motherhood and Coming Home." The book begins in the darkness of "Shame," "Guilt" and "Hate," with *Recovery,* which confronts addictive behaviors ("recovery programs" are acknowledged by Walker) that make the young woman more vulnerable to insecurity or exploitation, as revealed in *Youth.* It movingly traces the change from innocence to experience in a contemporary urban context, a "Simplicity" pattern nightgown being replaced by dirty "bellbottoms" in "Coming of Age in Toronto." In "Schoolgirl," the poet probes the slow silencing of young women as a continuing part of their socialization. She retrospectively salutes her pre-adolescent self: "Oh knocky- / kneed chatty school girl I / was! I wish I could hug / her now in her then unself- / conscious

uncool glory / because soon it will wither" (29-30).

Motherhood follows, with its familiar struggles and conflicts, especially raising sons who don't fit in. "Cupcake," for instance, muses on the boy who perfects his confection while his peers gleefully devour theirs, and concludes "You shut out the crash of the world and/ rest serene in the/friendly geometry of your mind" (53). But *Coming Home* triumphantly celebrates a satisfying, second, mid-life marriage in poems like "The sex life of a middle-aged woman." The speaker here contrasts Woolf's Clarissa Dalloway's "brittleness" with her own defiance of ageist stereotypes: "Dry egg…/Blood going, going gone. /And yet this erotic river flowers / thick, unbridled" (84). With wry honesty and an accessible style, Walker uncovers the many "traps" of female socialization, coming out the other side in confident middle age. She also varies her free verse with "Around the house: A week of domestic sedokas," in which the mundane is explored for its hidden rhythms and rituals: *Tuesday* / I change the bed sheets / your black sock is revealed there / between crumpled red linen / What good is a sock / without a foot? Or a mate? / I tuck it in your drawer" (67). "Third step, a villanelle" also turns self-help jargon into music with its refrain, "'Turn it over' is the mantra of my days/My mind resists and yet my heart obeys" (23).

Despite this earnest trajectory, however, humour and whimsy abound. In "The Dr. Seuss Challenge," (modeled after the famous metrical verses of the children's author), she rejects "co-dependence," declaring, "The hardest of lessons is to sit on my hands / keep my tongue in my mouth, tend to Madeline lands / Your lands, son, are yours, with your own skies above / I'll keep to my acreage, just sending out love" (15).

Motherhood, of course, is about different degrees of "co-dependence" at different stages, so Madeline's challenge is also likely ours, as children put aside Dr. Seuss in favour of i-pods, cars, and jobs. "My Ariadne," the mythopoetic meditation which opens the book, offers a feminist revision of the story, claiming Ariadne as the writer's guide through life's mazes: "Today we are gliding across/high terrain, wind whips her hair/lovingly, playfully. / Shards of rock / fall in love with her tough and / shapely feet" (4). Writing in the feminist tradition of Cixous's essay, "The Laugh of the Medusa," Walker (re)claims her goddess as an inspiration, ending with "Make the world her labyrinth / and let her breathe love. / Now, *that*'s my Ariadne" (7). Indeed, Demeter Press announces itself as a proud part of this feminist recovery project. Yet it is the mutual support of mates well-matched that creates the redemptive power of the second half of the collection, despite the pain of loss, reflecting the speaker's down-to-earth insight in "A Honeymoon Tale" that "Loss opens/a new page, splits a vein to bleed / from us the past" (74).

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Cixous, Helene. "The Laugh of the Medusa." *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. Gen. Ed. Vincent B. Leitch. New York: Norton, 2001. 2038-56.

The Music of Leaving: Poems

Tricia McCallum.
Bradford, Ontario: Demeter Press, 2014.

REVIEWED BY ELIZABETH CUMMINS MUÑOZ

In *The Music of Leaving,* Tricia McCallum reminds us: "We are granted a finite amount / of absolutely / everything. / Listen for the unspoken." In this slim collection of poems that explore the tender losses of everyday life, the seasoned poet lays out a lifetime of listening for the unspoken and living in full awareness of the meaning of the moment. Throughout *The Music of Leaving*, McCallum's images and narratives bloom like wildflowers, untamed and fire-struck and destined to fade. Nuns dance alone in the afternoon light of an empty schoolroom, falcons perch fierce with sinew and flesh tucked into their talons, and empty swing sets tell the story of an absence forever present. McCallum's poetic wisdom shines in the transience of these images as she uses the nostalgia of felt remembering to reveal the true meaning of the lives she recounts. In these poems, to remember is to feel what remains of the past—a lover's gesture, a confrontation, an image captured by chance. In the poet's direct, intimate language, the feelings that remain are the essence of the thing itself, the music of leaving.

The first of the slim collection's three sections, "Everyone's Gone to the Moon," explores this music through the quotidian observations and mundane intimacies of the world outside our front door. In many of these poems, poetic exploration is a means of getting at the truth of a memory, regardless of its circumstance. The moments worth remembering are fleeting and only acquire substance in the nostalgic act. Hence, what is true and real of a sister's childhood love is contained in one moment on a brilliant July day, or in an "us" that persists in a cascade of summer images. "The Trouble with Science" calls out the truth of memory and meaning, explaining that "science falls short. It overlooks / the power of the human heart / which has a memory all its own, /… undefiled by time / or faulty synapse" (44). This poem and others