



Lost Gospels

Lorri
Neilsen
Glenn

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Neilsen Glenn, Lorri

Lost gospels / Lorri Neilsen Glenn.

Poems.

ISBN 978-1-894078-77-1

I. Title.

PS8577.E3373L67 2010

C811'.6

C2009-907179-7

Copyright © Lorri Neilsen Glenn, 2010

We acknowledge the Canada Council for the Arts, the Government of Canada through the Book Publishing Industry Development Program (BPIDP), and the Ontario Arts Council for their support of our publishing program.



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des Arts
du Canada

Canada



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO

The cover image is a photograph of the Ponte Vecchio in Florence, taken by the author.

The author photograph was taken by Allan Neilsen.

The book is set in Minion and Trade Gothic.

Design and layout by Alan Siu.

Printed and bound by Sunville Printco Inc.

Brick Books

431 Boler Road, Box 20081

London, Ontario N6K 4G6

www.brickbooks.ca

Hillside Cemetery, Saskatoon

Forget God for a moment: consider the Latin *humanus*, human; *humere*, to be moist; *humilis*, to be lowly; and *humus*, of the soil. We dig holes, drop in bones, and for years afterward our feet trace paths between tended grass and stones over all that lingers: loyalty, Annabel's ear for music, Peter's unfinished argument and troubles with the gout, Eunice's thick ankles, that Gallic pique. The dampness forming states of mind as we traipse around in this short light: air, fire, water, and earth. And you—remember those nights in the graveyard in the spring? How we poured your father's rye into a thermos, tucked the afghan from your mother's armchair under your parka, found a candle and two cigarettes. We laughed to break down the dark, to hush stars, to claim dominion over cold stone and whispers. *My soul to take.*

Winter fire on a country road

Spruce and alder have bled into dark, woodstoves are tamped down, children in flannel, clocks ticking. A howl rips open the steep blue wall of sleep, window crumpling with shredded light, and he rises, feels the chill of his stiff boots by the door. In the black dazzle, sirens are shrapnel in his ears, two-way radios squawk and buzz, gravel pops under the grip of truck tires. Shaken, he picks his way over the ice to where the red lights loop, where the curious have tumbled from their houses and cars and line the road like torn packages: stricken hair, parkas over pyjamas, head and hands bare, boots gaping, windows down. A beehived woman with a child nuzzling into her coat sucks hard on her cigarette, glassy sparks splinter. Beyond, a house blazes like hallucination, gathers the circle of faces like strung moons, and he joins—as though it were a campfire on the beach, the new barbecue on the deck, the candle he lit in the bedroom overlooking the Codroy that summer hoping he would get lucky. He joins as we all join when we wonder what truth waits in the dark, what the devil offers this time, which new play god is rehearsing. We don't know and who does, so, clinging fiercely to our children, we lean closer into the rousing, divers perched over hell's flowering heat. We open our coats: *forgive us*. We ache to writhe inside such blue, lust so raw and ancient we can almost see to the other side.

Horse

A star followed me to the end of the dark road where I found a horse. I had set out for an evening walk. Behind me was a field, behind the field, a mountain. In the indigo above the mountain, a star, my bright companion. As were the dogs—did I mention the quiet husky, the curious, frantic pup? Did I mention the green hallways of vineyard beside the road? But I was telling you about the horse, his presence dark and heavy as the smell of his coat. Having startled each other, we called out, each in our own language. He allowed my hand to pat his sturdy neck, my fingers to stroke his nose, but neither of us moved closer. This was not the night to ride. The wind had already dropped her invisible scarves somewhere on the field. Trees and birds were quiet. The dogs kept their distance. I tell you the only truths I know. It was dark. A star followed me. I found a horse. I did not ride.