

Poetical Encounters

An Interview with Jan Conn

In *The Fiddlehead* review of Jan Conn's book *Botero's Beautiful Horses*, M. Travis Lane suggests that the potential surrealism of this poetry collection does not necessarily lead us towards "unrealism"; on the contrary, it may point us to "alternative realities" (201). It is exactly from such recognition of possibilities, alternatives, and newness that the following interview with Jan Conn can be fruitfully read. Conn has been writing poetry since the 1970s. With eight books published, her most recent is *Edge Effects* (2012). Many of her poems have been published in a variety of anthologies and literary journals. By reading her pieces, one might become aware of a constant and almost inexhaustible interest in observation and re-creation of meanings that come through the unpredicted connections between what she calls "the borders, or memory chasms" of inner and outer spaces. In this context, her writing is attentive not only to the element of surprise but also to where unexpectedness might take us in the creation of new knowledge or new ways of seeing. The following interview opens a door to the varied ways of reading and enjoying Conn's writing.

Magali Sperling Beck (MSB): In previous interviews (with Sharon Caseburg and Rob McLennan, for example) you have commented on your perception of the interrelations between science and poetry, as you are both a renowned scientist and an award-winning poet. What fascinates me in your answers is the sense that both disciplines allow you to go towards what might be called the edge of knowledge. Could you discuss a little more about this aspect in relation to your poetical writing, considering in particular the intricacies between *newness* and *communication*?

Jan Conn (JC): I like to think that I am on a road toward “the edge of knowledge” in poetry. It’s a constant evolution of focus and style, rhythm, playfulness. I’m attracted to associative, lyrical, fragmentary and narrative aspects of poetry, and to “disjunctive linking” in *renga*. I want language to purr, jump, swing.

One of my reasons for writing poetry is to emulate the great contemporary Mexican photographer, Graciela Iturbide who says, “I insist on astonishment. . . .” As an example, she has a black and white photograph of a woman in a desert landscape who seems about to become airborne. It’s completely revelatory to me, this image. It stays with me, makes me feel suspended. That I, too, could fly.

To me, astonishment and newness are linked, something to strive for in every poem even though this can be challenging, elusive. Hiroaki Sato notes in *One Hundred Frogs* in relation to collaborative *renga* that not every poem needs to be a firecracker, still one wants to try to provide a novel perspective, a moment (or more!) when the potential reader is moved, changed, made to pause and consider something more deeply—from an alternative view—or is stimulated by an unusual image, a terrific metaphor, an arrangement of words that strikes a chord. Usually newness arrives unexpectedly, intuitively, but sometimes the use of a different poetic form or a different kind of language that belongs, say, to a software engineer or one who plans highways (a fascinating example is Sina Queyras’ *Expressway*), or a focus on the moods and topography of a single New Brunswick river (like *One* by Serge Patrice Thibodeau), can work wonders.

Is there a trade-off between newness and communication? In *Jaguar Rain* I wanted to provide readers both with a fresh sense of the Amazon, past and present (newness), and Margaret Mee’s very substantial botanical discoveries (communication). A lot of the information was packed into the notes in the back, where readers could consult it if interested. I think that some of the poems got a bit stuck in overzealous description of the richness and diversity (too much focus on communication; not enough newness). On the other hand, the plant biographies, the haiku series, and some poems that had their genesis as a kind of game or experiment, like “Amazonian Whites,” “Mistaken for Thieves,” “Wildlife,” and “Fish Pictographs,” combined these two elements in novel and mischievous ways.

I think it’s crucial to distinguish between communication and accessibility. Striving for accessibility can dampen the spark of the poem. In a recent interview in *The Malahat Review*, Lorna Crozier discusses the issue of poetics and accessibility very clearly. One of the poets I’d say most exemplifies “newness” for me is Anne Carson, who has a genius for innovation in form

and language. Yet, few people would say that her writing is necessarily easy to grasp or follow. Why should it be? Yes, we need to educate a readership to carve out time for poetry, for literature, but the very format of poetry tends to be demanding. Probably, like surrealism, it's an acquired taste. I think that except in unique situations as in Chile when Pablo Neruda drew crowds of hundreds routinely, the audience will remain pretty small, except at some literary festivals and special poetry events. An ecologist acquaintance of mine, a professor at Penn State, who asked for a copy of *Botero's Beautiful Horses*, said that after two intense hours he noticed that his poetry reading muscle was underdeveloped, and it needed more regular exercise.

MSB: On one hand, you have also suggested that you do not necessarily see your writing as an attempt to answer a particular set of questions or to consciously address a specific topic of interest. On the other hand, geographical dislocation and exploration of new spaces and places are very prominent themes in your poetry. Would you see travel as a trope in your poetics? How or why do you choose the places you wish to physically or imaginatively explore?

JC: In some poems, yes, I see travel as a trope, and mostly as metaphor, occasionally irony, or synecdoche. On the other hand, I really do travel quite extensively, so sometimes a poem is a narrative reconstruction that could seem completely fabricated.

I am not consciously writing poetry to better understand the places I travel to or work in, but I do read a great deal on natural history, history, topography, art, architecture, language, and culture before, during and after my physical journeys, and sometimes this information seeps inside poems. I also write to expand my inner vision, to incorporate strange juxtapositions, adventures, random events, new art. I write because I want access to my subconscious, to associations and connections that can provoke me into writing poetry in more innovative ways.

More recently, rather than choosing a geographic locale to explore, I have been focusing on the environment of an artist who piques my interest. For instance, when I was in Madrid I saw a remarkable retrospective show of Modigliani's paintings and drawings. This drew me to delve into the art world in Paris before and during World War I in more detail: the hot, exciting painters and sculptors who were assembled there, how they interacted with Modigliani, how his style grew and changed under many influences. Similarly, I have learned a great deal about Germany and Switzerland historically and culturally because of my fascination with the art and the Bauhaus lectures on theories of painting, colour, and line by Paul Klee.

It's fair to say that my latest book, *Edge Effects*, is centred much more consciously on Europe than on Latin America.

On the other hand, I continue to do research in Latin America. I have collaborative projects in Colombia, Panama and Peru, as well as Brazil. I am sure that poems will be generated by some of my experiences in these countries. It's a natural outcome of exposure to anything from Colombian TV news to Brazilian folk art that can provoke language to depart from earlier ways of creative expression.

MSB: Could we say, then, that some of these geographical spaces, such as Guatemala, Venezuela, Brazil, or Mexico become more than travelled locations in your poetry since they are also spaces of rediscovery for the travelling self?

JC: Probably I "grew up" in some way geopolitically, in Guatemala, getting very fragmentary glimpses of some of the violence that was all around and sometimes, literally, beneath my feet (particularly in Guatemala City where political prisoners were held and tortured in cells underneath the main square). I was not aware of this until a few years ago. I was working in Guatemala on field research for my doctoral thesis at the University of Toronto during the summers of 1983-1985. It was the first time I saw someone shot.

Even though my first trip to Brazil in 1987 was enabled by a Canada Council writing grant, for part of the trip I travelled with Canadian botanists, collecting aquatic plants. It is a country of mythical proportions and contrasts. I realized I could spend the rest of my life exploring its natural and cultural riches, and never be satiated.

I don't think I realized how much I loved and needed winter, on some visceral level, and how strongly it defines part of me, this stupendous season and its crystal-clear sounds, its outdoor activities, until I spent two years in Venezuela (1988-1990). The poem "Icebergs on the Rio Doradas," in *Beauties on Mad River*, hints at this longing, but winter is probably completely tied up with my identity as a Canadian. I also feel strongly, but very ambivalently, about the focus of the Canadian north, as the painters in the Group of Seven, and later composer Glenn Gould, described and envisioned it.

"The Flower Woman and the Dog Star," written in Venezuela, gave me another perspective on depression, which has been an integral, and often very disturbing and debilitating, part of my life. The writing in Brazil of "Saying Good-bye in Belem" provided me with some of the tools to imaginatively cope with the end of a relationship, and helped it survive as

an important friendship. “La Virgen de la Paz,” written about an incident in Venezuela, aided me in understanding an aspect of my mother’s suicide. The ending of this poem differs: the suicidal teenager survived.

In *Botero’s Beautiful Horses*, the section called “Cosmological” provided a re-entry into some aspects of Mexican cultural history and anthropology, which has been a fascination of mine since adolescence. I wanted to explore that rich heritage of mythology and dreaming. At one point in my early twenties, I envisioned becoming an archaeologist.

MSB: Another very intriguing aspect of the connection between your writing practices and travel is that you often write in planes, cars, trains, or in what you have called a “transition time” [in the interview with McLennan]. In this context, movement, or the sense of being “neither here nor there,” may generate an intense space for creation and for an acute awareness of possibility. Would you see these physical dislocations, this temporary inhabiting of an in-between space, as also reflecting the process of writing itself?

JC: At times I use travel and the corresponding physical dislocations, even the lack of sleep after long flights, to fuel creativity. One has more access to unexpected links. I wrote the poem “The Event,” in *Botero’s Beautiful Horses*, on my first flight to Bogotá, Colombia, in 2005. I had not slept the previous night, working against a deadline for submission of a major application for scientific funding. So in my view this poem has wilder language and imagery (such as, “the barked dog/thicker and richer and redder” and “Zebra hidden in a striped zoo . . .”) than poems written under more “conventional” circumstances. In strange locations little or nothing is familiar. This is often advantageous for a creative writer.

Possibly such juxtapositions and movement naturally fuel more fragmentary, leaping poems, such as the short, lyrical “Yellow Dog” and “Ahora,” the connected series of multiple visions of Mexico, in *Botero’s Beautiful Horses*. The corresponding observation would be that I might write more narrative poems when not travelling, but my writing process is never that black-and-white. When I am completely immersed in a painting, studying it, waiting for a transformational moment, this process has a similar effect on my writing as the transitional time inherent in travel. Sometimes I carry reproductions of especially fascinating art with me on trips, to maintain my focus, if I am working on a series of poems inspired by a single artist.

MSB: It is also intriguing to think about the juxtapositions of “selves” that occur in your poems, especially considering, for example, your rereading of Margaret Mee in *Jaguar Rain* and of the Spanish-Mexican artist Remedios Varo in

Botero's Beautiful Horses. I find it is quite relevant (or revealing) that one of the aspects you emphasize on Mee's work is the fact she "was the first botanical artist to begin to put exuberant background details into her formal botanical paintings" (*Jaguar Rain* 107), which shows, among other things, Mee's awareness about the interconnectedness of ecosystems. Would you say that this sense of interconnection (of places, people, and cultures) speaks to your writing as well? How?

JC: Mee was a pioneer in alerting us to the complexities and interdependence of organisms in single ecosystems within the Amazon. It's hard to think of the exuberance of the flora and fauna of the rainforest in isolation, for me, and I experienced the cultures of the Mauhés, the Rikbaktsa, and the Waika, and their connections with their environment, through the eyes of Mee and her explorer predecessors such as Alexander von Humboldt, Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira, and Richard Spruce. In the section "Antecedents" (in *Jaguar Rain*), I imaginatively reconstructed the environments of objects, some of which are now only found in museum collections (petroglyphs, spears, a turtle shell, a jaguar mask).

Because earlier Mexican cultures have left so many tangible (often stone or ceramic) cultural, religious and quotidian items, and I have been mesmerized by them since I was a teen-ager, I could imagine deeper aspects of their societies, as I did in *Botero's Beautiful Horses*. I was familiar enough with Maya mythology to be able to say "The Rain Gods hate their job/ but love to fish, all day, all night. / Dazzling in lapis lazuli wetsuits." Or my poetic persona could empathize with the Water Goddess as she helplessly watched the volcano Xictli erupt and destroy the regional cultural centre of Cuicuilco.

Remedios Varo's fantastical and magical paintings exerted a different kind of allure. In "Orinoco," for example, the female explorer's amazing raincoat has been converted into a boat, and there is something unfulfilling about her journey to the source of this impressive South American river. Yet she is profoundly attuned to her environment, full of unusual talking birds and bats that conduct an orchestra of armadillos, and continues on her way, beyond the poem, steering among the trees.

MSB: Discussing travel and poetics in "Mapmaking: The Poet as a Travel Writer," Beatriz Badikian writes: "All poets are travelers. Whether literally or metaphorically, we journey through words to discover new worlds. And we journey through the world to create new words. . . . During these journeys we also become travel writers of sorts" (73). Would you see your writing experience as echoing Badikian's words?

JC: I appreciate Badikian's quote. I think my adolescent reading of art and archaeology of Central and South America, combined with the postcards and exotic presents from my father's international travel, was one of the things that kindled my "journey through words to discover new worlds." And of course, every time I discover a new poet, or visual artist, or a new country or culture, my horizons expand, sometimes exponentially.

I felt that both *Jaguar Rain* and *Botero's Beautiful Horses* were quite dominated by colour, including many shades of black, partly due to the subject matter (a focus on flora and fauna, and history of Mexico and Latin America). In *Edge Effects*, I decided to emphasize textures coupled with a much more sparing use of colour, to focus more on different ways of using poetic language, and not to depend as much on exotic locale to carry a poem. I wanted to reduce descriptiveness in my poems. If the poem insisted on colour, I wanted it to be more tantalizing, for example "borderline blue" and "enigmatic orange" in a poem inspired by Paul Klee called "Not as it is Perceived in the Phenomenal World" that appeared in *The Malahat Review* (2008). The poem "Space is a Temporal Concept," that appeared in *The Best Canadian Poetry in English Anthology* in 2009, avoids the use of colour altogether, and is the richer for it.

The American artist Jenny Holzer fascinates me because of the way she projects language visually. It's an amazing experience to stand in a museum with one of her moving LED word displays rippling through one's mind. This experience really electrified me linguistically. A poem in *Edge Effects* especially affected by her work is called "The Present is Elusive," published in *filling Station*. The first line is "I prefer to live in the cracks of events."

MSB: To what extent are your poems autobiographical? You have already mentioned that some poems were written as a way to negotiate traumatic personal experiences from your past, such as your mother's suicide, or sexual abuse. So, I guess I am wondering about how personal memory is worked through in your poetics.

JC: Some poems reflect my childhood, adolescence, many are exaggerated to various degrees; all are transformed. Memory is storytelling, and each time the story is told the details shift. These poems have been written in part to communicate perilous, tragic circumstances, but also to move memories and events from interior to exterior space, to expose them to more light and air. Exploration of inner space is just as fascinating as outer space, and there are borders, or memory chasms, where one can see both at once.

The era of confessional poetry is over for me, but I feel this way because I have written about, and worked relentlessly on, these hard times in my

own life to enable me to move forward without carrying such a debilitating cargo. Those early scars are part of the fabric of self. Carolyn Smart has spoken eloquently in an interview with Alessandro Porco about confessional poetry versus dramatic monologue in relation to her fine book *Hooked* (2009), which explores the lives of seven women artists. With the writing of *Jaguar Rain*, for the first time I was able to submerge myself in another “I,” a transformed self. This envoicement of Mee provided a tremendous sensation of freedom. I felt this way, also, when researching material for the poems about the Spanish-Mexican painter Remedios Varo for the last two sections of *Botero’s Beautiful Horses*. I could inhabit her persona, without losing my sense of self, and imagine aspects of her fascinating life and her (mostly) surreal paintings from that invented place.

I have taken this process a step farther in *Edge Effects*, in poems about people on the fringes of society, both men and women. Some of these poems have also appeared in *PRISM international* (2010). I began by meticulously studying images, interviews and poems of the South African painter Marlene Dumas, who lives in Amsterdam. She grew up near Cape Town, South Africa, and I have travelled there several times, in part to explore her terrain. These were arduous poems for me. They required a struggle to leave behind my cultural and class-bound inheritance, and to write from the perspective of a stripper, an accident victim, a person in a straitjacket, and an adolescent male prostitute, among others. One of my younger readers said she could not find a single trace of me in these poems.

MSB: You have often mentioned how influential your father was both for your scientific career and for your poetical discoveries, and such influence is also woven through your writing, particularly through the poems that recover memories of family life and reconstructions of travelled spaces. In my reading of poems such as “Fusion,” “While I was Looking at the Background You Walked Out of the Picture,” and “One View from the Look-Out Tower,” among many others, I perceive a strong connection between the image of the father and the image of the traveller or “explorer”—the one who would be away from home, exploring and discovering new spaces. Conversely, the image of the mother seems to struggle with the enclosure of the domestic space (being sometimes maybe even overwhelmed by it). Would you see your writing, and particularly your interest in travel, as a way to rewrite this story?

JC: Yes, to rewrite the story, an interesting observation, one I’ve been conscious of since I was a teenager. I noticed how much more I was attracted to my father’s views of the world and professional life. He was both a template and

a lodestar, and he offered a way out, of ugly Asbestos and the enormous open pit mine, out of the potential perils of domestic life. After my mother's suicide in 1976 there seemed to be an added threat in domesticity and small-town culture. It was as though there was a DANGER THIN ICE sign in my head.

In 1975 my parents and my youngest sister moved to Denver, Colorado, a significant relocation and promotion for my father. The headquarters of the Johns-Manville Company, owners of the Jeffrey Mine in Asbestos, moved to Colorado from upper New York State. Several other Asbestos-based families moved too, so they formed a loosely-knit Canadian community in Littleton, a suburb of Denver. However, the next year (1976) my mother killed herself, leaving me with an odd subliminal message: beware of moving to the US.

I was especially conscious of the drive and desire to travel during the summer of 2007—I went to South America four times between April and August, and it occurred to me that this might be rather excessive. I recognized that I am chronically conflicted as a Canadian living in the US. I think I began to understand my father at a different level psychologically after my own increased awareness. Perhaps he found Asbestos constraining and limited, and/or emotionally uncomfortable (he did not speak much French), so pursued travel for stimulus and change. I am probably more like him than I have recognized.

My way of managing this interior conflict of residing in the US is to actively seek opportunities either to come home to Canada, or to travel to Latin America or Europe where I feel I will be nourished, charged, and inspired to write. I feel more at home in both Mexico and Brazil than in the US, despite my marvellous American husband, many friends and colleagues, and some outstanding opportunities there. However, my poetry has benefited tremendously by exposure to the writings of many US poets. The sheer volume can be pretty overwhelming. I remember recently comparing notes with Douglas Burnet Smith, who teaches American literature at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. When Canadian friends ask either of us to recommend US poets we have been reading, we sometimes say, the first hundred or the second?

MSB: If constantly travelling in and out of the US enables you to negotiate this tension of being a Canadian living there, would you say that writing poetry and being published in Canada allow you to better elaborate on your cultural affiliations and sense of identity?

JC: My primary sense of self is clearly Canadian, there is no ambivalence there. Also, my main poetry community is Canadian, writers with whom I meet and communicate regularly. I do readings as often as possible in Canada, in

literary festivals, reading series, and classrooms, for which I am truly grateful to Kitty Lewis at Brick Books, who has gone out of her way to facilitate this. I read a lot of Canadian literature, along with reviews and criticism, I subscribe to several Canadian literary journals, and I also attend The Writers' Union of Canada frequently, which, taken together, help me to feel connected to the concerns of other Canadian writers.

In *Botero's Beautiful Horses*, several poems were written in or about Canada, such as "Dalí D'Hiver" (Montreal), "Just Another Story about Billy the Kid" (Toronto), "Fragrance of the Moon" (Vancouver), and "Monkey Paws, Railway Ties" (Montreal). Parts of *Edge Effects* are more focused on things Canadian, for example several of the poems began from interviews and paintings by Canadian artist Peter Doig ("Years in a Leaky Boat," "Night Deeper than Water"), there is a poem set in Calgary and Muskoka ("Reality Beside Itself"), one written in Banff ("Self as Parchment"), and one from an inspiring visit to Saskatchewan in 2009.

Since 2006 I have been doing collaborative *renga* writing with three Canadian poets: Mary di Michele, Susan Gillis, and Jane Munro. This has been an amazing experience for us. We mostly work online, by email, and meet in person once a year, in the country, to write and rewrite and drink wine and laugh. We have a web page and a book, *Whisk*, published by Pedlar Press in 2013. We call ourselves Yoko's Dogs. This experience of collaborative writing has really fostered and deepened my ties with Canada. It's a very rigorous poetry routine, and it influences the way I think about poetry.

MSB: Although *renga* writing is a very strict form, with rules and patterns to be followed, it is also open to plurality and to the unexpected due to its collaborative element. How does this combination stimulate your poetical imagination?

JC: I like challenges, and I love the porous boundaries of alternating seventeen and fourteen syllables. For those unfamiliar with four-person *renga*, the first person writes an opening *hokku* (seventeen syllables), followed by the second person who links to this via the fourteen syllable *waki*; then the third person tackles the *daisan* of seventeen syllables, the "disjunctive linking," and the fourth person writes the *ageku*, or closing fourteen syllables. We alternate order, naturally, so each of us has learned to write from each of the four positions within *renga*.

I have found when I am working intensely on *renga* that my imagination becomes attuned to the rhythm of these two syllabic counts; this alters my language use, and, since *renga* doesn't work with metaphor or abstract language, it forces me to ask if the poem I have written can be detected with one or more of the senses. If not, out it goes. Also there is the element of

surprise, the unexpected, or the so-called hinge of the poem, which makes each piece a mini-revelation of perception, pun or alliteration. We are very democratic. Each of us has to accept each poem, and we all act as editors. This keeps the language and imagery sharp and fresh.

MSB: Another aspect that intrigues me in your writing is the question of perspective. Many of your poems suggest the intricate negotiations between observer (maybe the lyrical persona, the traveller, the speaker) and observed (spaces travelled, flora, fauna, people, art). Yet, their interactions often destabilize the direction of the observing “gaze” (the observer is not always the only one watching), as poems such as “Belém” and “Mato Grosso,” in *South of the Tudo Bem Café*, “Mountain of Mist and Cloud,” in *Jaguar Rain*, and more recently “Golden,” in *Botero’s Beautiful Horses*, seem to suggest. What part does perspective play in the composition of a poem?

JC: I do like to alternate the position of the speaker within poems, particularly because I notice that in the process of observing an incident or a sound pattern that stands out, the observer morphs to a certain extent, both inside and outside the poem.

In “Mountain of Mist and Cloud,” the poetic persona begins as a god, though bemusedly, merely a minor mountain god, poking gentle fun at monotheism; then envoicing Mee as she has a dialogue with the mountain, Pico da Neblina, she hopes fervently to climb. Here, she is the explorer, through and through, wanting to be “the first European / up the southern approach.” But she has doubts, and may need to use feathers, bound to her upper arm, to enable the expedition to continue. When she encounters the Waika shaman, there is an abrupt dislocation, as though she takes a step outside herself, wondering, “What am I doing here?” The only way she can reconnect with the mountain and the Waika culture is to transform into one of her beloved flowers, and this allows her to continue upward, “Shall I lift my carnelian skirts / and begin the ascent?”

In “Golden” (*Botero’s Beautiful Horses*), Remedios Varo’s painting is very rich and fantastic so my instinct was to bring some of the poetic imagery back to the level of biological “magic,” for example listening in on the dialogues of leaf-cutting ants, watching the luna moth preen before a mirror. So the observer slowly moves around inside the scene being created, dreamily transitioning from land to water as she climbs into a gondola, but near the end steps mysteriously outside this “golden orange spiral city” when her gondola tilts. This kind of layering of movement and charged change reflects the complexity of our psyches and appeals to me.

MSB: What does your more recent work on *ekphrasis* allow you to accomplish in relation to creating newness in language? How does the intertwining between word and visual image collaborate in the construction of meaning in your poetry?

JC: I have moved and evolved in my emphasis on *ekphrasis*, from the most visual, working within the Amazonian flora of Margaret Mee, through the fantastical Mexican dream-time in Remedios Varo, the abstract but very emotionally charged paintings of Paul Klee, the re-envisioning of some Canadian landscape elements and myths through the eyes of Peter Doig, human figures and their phenomenal diversity in Marlene Dumas, and the use of language as visual art in Jenny Holzer.

I think that the combination of the influences of Klee/Doig/Dumas/Holzer have had the most dramatic effects on my efforts to articulate poetry differently. This is because these painters have forced me to think more deeply about ideas and words, not so visually. For example, a poem in *The Fiddlehead* in 2010 called “Years in a Leaky Boat,” which was stimulated by a Peter Doig work, hints at this change in the final stanza: “This is a quasi-representational work of art, / no to “red sky at night,” / but yes to scorpion red beneath the prow.” The poem “The Sources of the Self,” published in *PRISM*, very clearly turns away from exteriors: “It feels like infinity / could take up residence in me, some rough place / like my liver, that won’t see daylight.”

WORKS CITED

- Badikian, Beatriz. “Mapmaking: The Poet as Travel Writer.” *Travel Culture: Essays on What Makes us Go*. Ed. Carol Traynor Williams. Westport: Praeger, 1998.
- Caseburg, Sharon. “An Interview with Jan Conn.” *CV2* (Winter 2008): 33-39.
- Conn, Jan. *Edge Effects*. London, ON: Brick, 2012.
- . *Botero’s Beautiful Horses*. London, ON: Brick, 2009.
- . *Jaguar Rain: The Margaret Mee Poems*. London, ON: Brick, 2006.
- . *Beauties on Mad River: Selected and New Poems*. Montreal: Véhicule, 2000.
- . *What Dante Did With Loss*. Montreal: Signal, 1994.
- . *South of Tudo Bem Café*. Montreal: Signal, 1990.
- . *Fabulous Disguise of Ourselves*. Montreal: Signal, 1986.
- . *Red Shoes in the Rain*. Fredericton: Fiddlehead Poetry Book, 1984.
- Lane, Travis M. “Left Sided Poetry: Botero’s Beautiful Horses, Jan Conn.” *The Fiddlehead*. 244 (Summer 2010): 197-201.
- mclennan, rob. “12 or 20 questions: with Jan Conn.” *rob mclennan’s blog*. 13 May 2008, 24 Aug 2010. <<http://robmclennan.blogspot.com.br/2008/05/12-or-20-questions-with-jan-conn-jan.html>>