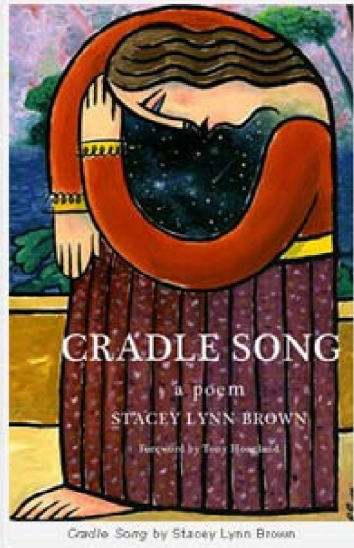




## just one (book) thing: stacey lynn brown's 'cradle song'

August 11th, 2009

by Jessica Fox-Wilson



*"The literal truth of a poem is much less important to me than its emotional core and relevance."*

Just One (Book) Thing, and its sister column, Just One (Chapbook) Thing, are two of the new columns we're sharing each month here at Read Write Poem. The idea of the columns is to share books and chapbooks with our participants in a fresh way. Rather than doing a book review or a long-form interview, I will read a poetry collection every month, and Nathan Moore will read a chapbook collection every month. Then we'll ask each author one single question — the one thing we really want to know, and share with you, after experiencing each work.

We hope you find the Just One Thing columns to be entertaining and informative. And we hope the authors' responses to our questions make you want to pick up their collections and find out more about their work.

For the inaugural Just One (Book) Thing interview, I chose to interview [Stacey Lynn Brown](#), author of the debut collection *Cradle Song* (C&R Press, 2009). The book is ambitious, a collection of 41 linked poems that tell the story of a young, Southern white girl raised by an African-American nursemaid and caregiver. All the poems are written in persona, using the voices of the young girl, the nursemaid and the girl's mother. Through these voices, Brown reveals the undercurrent of race, class and gender that has shaped these three women's lives.

The use of persona in the book is remarkable because each character is distinct, from the tough-talking Gaither (the nursemaid) to the quietly rebellious mother. Brown captures the cadences and emotions of each character, without drifting into sentimentality or stereotype. Instead, the reader feels drawn into these characters' worlds, watching as their relationships shift, evolve and strain as they age.

Considering her use of persona for a full-length book, I chose to ask the author about the strengths and limitations of the character's perspective, in contrast to the autobiographical "I." Below is my question and her response.

**What do you feel you can accomplish by writing in persona that you cannot accomplish by writing in an autobiographical voice?**

As with any construct in poetry, there are limitations and possibilities inherent in both persona and the autobiographical "I," but I don't actually see them as being mutually exclusive. Each one relies upon

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### read write poll

Which of these quotes from famous poets comes closest to your own thoughts about poetry?

"Poetry is concerned with using with abusing, with losing with wanting with denying with avoiding with adoring with replacing the noun." — Gertrude Stein, *Lectures in America* (30%, 74 Votes)

"Nor till the poets among us ... can present ... 'imaginary gardens with real toads in them,' / shall we have / it." — Marianne Moore, "Poetry" (24%, 59 Votes)

"All good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." — Wordsworth, preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1802) (23%, 55 Votes)

"Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality." — T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and Individual Talent" (14%, 33 Votes)

"There's no creativity, there's just decisions." — Kenneth Goldsmith, *July Podcast, Poetry Foundation* (9%, 23 Votes)

Total Voters: 244

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Andre Tan  
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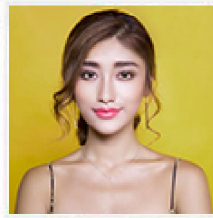
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## Carol

### The Basics

City	Castleton-on-Hudson
State	New York
Country	United States of America
About Me	poet.
Occupation	by day: Jupiter's chief marine biologist, by night: the sexiest bartender in Atlantis
Hobbies	writing. reading. running. wine and beer. zumba.
Favorite Poets	Anne Sexton, William Stafford, Mary Oliver, Marie Howe, Dorianne Laux, Sharon Olds, Charles Simic, Cate Marvin
What is the first book of poetry you see when you scan the room you are sitting in?	Red Shoes by Honor Moore (a birthday gift from Jill)
If someone let you loose in a bookstore with a crisp \$100 bill, what would you do?	Ask if they've got more where that came from.
Three poets find themselves in a rowboat, in the middle of the ocean, during a huge storm. How do they get themselves out of their predicament?	Get out of their predicament? They won't. They'll want to suffer through it so they can write about it later on with little regard for actual events.
My Website	
My Twitter Username	<a href="http://twitter.com/carol">http://twitter.com/carol</a>
My Identica Username	<a href="http://identi.ca/carol">http://identi.ca/carol</a>
My Facebook Profile URL	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/carol">http://www.facebook.com/carol</a>

### Carolee's Activity

[RSS Feed](#)

 Carolee wrote on [Dana Guthrie Martin's WIRE](#): 55 minutes ago

happy birthday! i hope feldman bought just the right thing.

 [Joseph Harker](#) and [Carolee](#) are now friends 13 hours, 25 minutes ago

 [Rachel Leastlikely](#) and [Carolee](#) are now friends 10 hours, 44 minutes ago

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### Groups Listing

Viewing group 1 to 10 (of 49 groups)

1 2 ... 5 >



#### Haiku and Other Formal Short Forms

active 4 minutes ago

We talk about formal short forms such as haiku, senryū, reiku, etc.

Public Group / 40 members

Leave Group -



#### Prose : Poetry & The Apple

active 30 minutes ago

Prose : Poetry = as in prose that is poetry.

This is a place to Give, Share : Receive, Feedback.

Open for discussions about Prose : Poetry of any kind.

Members can post personal work, but must realize that they are opening the piece up for discussion among the group.

Members when commenting on personal work must adhere to rules of common decency and respect.

Last but not least : please follow a post with a question you'd like members to respond to or think about. This way we are all facilitators of our own conversations.

This is a place in which we cultivate.

Public Group / 30 members

Leave Group -



#### Wallace Stevens Fans

active 46 minutes ago

People who love Wallace Stevens

Public Group / 8 members

Join Group +



#### Seattle Poets

active 2 hours, 9 minutes ago

Live in the Seattle area? Join this group to connect with other poets who live here, too.

Public Group / 8 members

Leave Group -



#### NaPoWriMo

active 2 hours, 12 minutes ago

During NaPoWriMo, Read Write Poem will share a prompt each day. Don't miss it. When it's closer to the event, we will open up a forum for this group where members can create their own blogroll.

avatar from Pessoa's book sculpture by [pedrosimoes7's](#) in accordance with his Creative Commons license.

Public Group / 24 members

Join Group +



#### Read Write Poem's Intro to Critique (201)

active 2 hours, 20 minutes ago

Intro to Critique (201) is for those who are new to critique and for those who want a lighter critique of their work. Make sure you review [Sharing and Critiquing Poems](#) before getting started.

If you share your work here, you should also participate by responding to other people's work. Don't just drop and dash. Participation goes both ways.

Start a new forum thread for your poem, and others will come comment on the poem in that thread.

(avatar from *Black Circle* by Nathan Moore)

Private Group / 30 members

Leave Group -



#### Ekphrasis

active 2 hours, 25 minutes ago

In this group, *ekphrasis* will be interpreted in its broadest sense as words describing images. There are many artists and photographers among the RWP community. This forum will be a place where word and image come together. While images may be the work of the writer, let's leave the door open to collaborations between poets and visual artists, or even poetry inspired by other media. The only rule here is that all images described or linked to should include a credit to the creator. For further definitions of *ekphrasis* try [wikipedia](#) and Ryan Welch's essay on the U. of Chicago's [Theories of Media](#) website.

Public Group / 14 members

Leave Group -



#### Nature Poetry

active 2 hours, 59 minutes ago

for anyone interested in nature poetry and eco-poetry

Public Group / 33 members

Join Group +

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#### Haiku and Other Formal Short Forms

active 4 minutes ago

Members: 40 members

**Description:**  
We talk about formal short forms such as haiku, senryū, reiku, etc.



#### Diasporic Poetry

active 13 hours, 57 minutes ago

Members: 19 members

**Description:**  
Poetry that deals with issues relevant to the diasporic experience, such as journey, movement, homeland, displacement and exile.



#### LOLcat Poetry: Can Has Poems?

active 4 days ago

Members: 69 members

**Description:**  
You know, stuff like this:

[LOLcat Westland](#)

Or this:

[The Lamburger](#)

Link to any LOLcat poetry you see online, or make your own LOLcat poems and post links to the poems or the poems themselves. There's a permanent forum thread where you can leave work or links to work.

Helpful tools for mastering the LOLcat language.

**Speak LOLcat**

A good resource for translating specific words.

**LOLspeak 101**

A comprehensive guide to word choice, grammar and more!

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#### Read Write Poem Virtual Book Tour

active 1 day, 9 hours ago

Members: 13 members

**Description:**  
This group is for those who want to keep up with the latest Read Write Poem Virtual Blog Tour news, those who have participated in the series as reviewers and those who are interested in being reviewers.

Group avatar from Old Book Shop by [janyibell](#) in accordance with her Creative Commons license.



#### Micropoetry

active 3 days, 1 hour ago

Members: 37 members

**Description:**  
Poetry written on or for microblog platforms, such as Twitter.