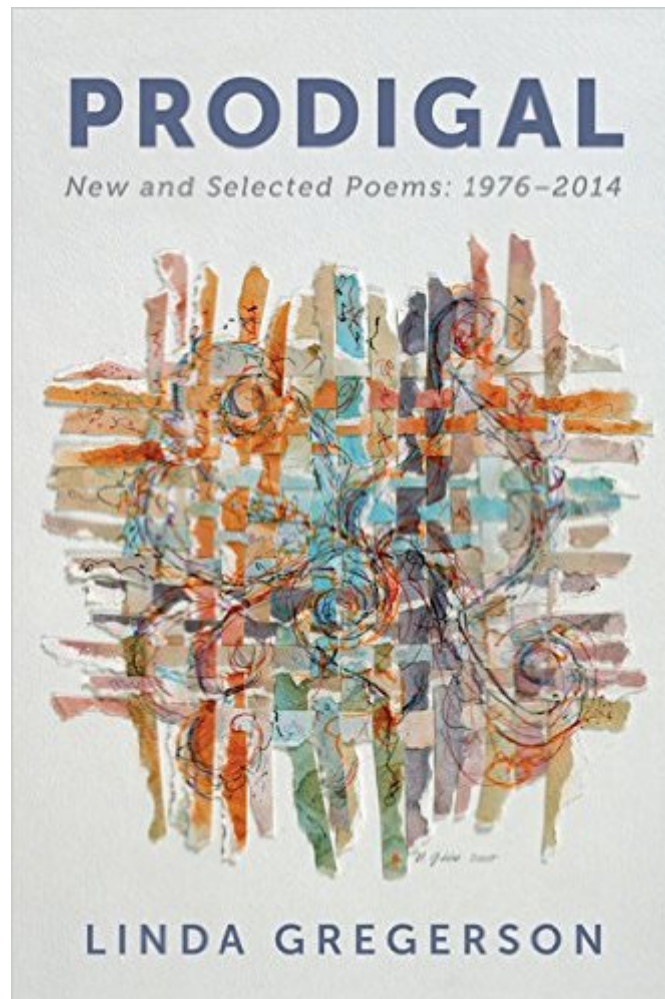


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# Prodigal: New And Selected Poems, 1976 To 2014



## Synopsis

In her first book of collected work, prize-winning poet Linda Gregerson mines nearly forty years of poetry, bringing us a full range of her talents. Ten new poems introduce *Prodigal*, followed by fifty poems, culled from Gregerson's five collections, that range broadly in subject from class in America to our world's ravaged environment to the wonders of parenthood to the intersection of science and art to the passion of the Roman gods, and beyond. This selection reinforces Gregerson's standing as a "one of poetry's mavens . . . whose poetics seek truth through the precise apprehension of the beautiful while never denying the importance of rationality" (Chicago Tribune). A brilliant stylist, known for her formal experiments as well as her perfected lines, Gregerson is a poet of great vision. Here, the growth of her art and the breadth of her interests offer a snapshot of a major poet's intellect in the midst of her career.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

augustine, the bishop of hippo, cited more than once by gregerson in the *PRODIGAL* collection, wrote in *THE CITY OF GOD* about the vast number of gods standing between man and the world, several dozens of roman gods alone for a single door, a different god relegated to every part of the door. with so many gods to appease, who had time for life's daily routines, let alone to open a door? there is a question gregerson poses as a theme throughout her poems: is the god of the judeo-christians any more helpful in times of suffering and pain of children than any of the other gods? in five of ten of her new poems she mentions roman and greek gods and goddesses. if the underlying debate is between faith and fate, then in a world where suffering is unabated, fate, transcendent of fatality, appears to have the edge. but if matters were that easy, gregerson's

poems would not be. within the warp is woven, unraveled, and rewoven many strands, the complexities as metaphor which run through her poems. in BLEEDTHROUGH she writes:  
â ^â |When the/painter, for example, looks for/leverage/on a metaphor, nine-/tenths of her labor is in-the-flesh. The wash/of acrylic, /the retinal flare: we say/that the surfeited pigment â œbleeds.â •  
And/every/counter-argumentâ "the margin of shoreline, the margin of black, the four-/fold/margin sheâ™s stretched the canvas to com-/prehendâ "undoes itself a little in its straining after emphasis.  
â |â™ or a poem about the work of sculptor and fabric artist, magdalena abakanowicz, seen as torn skin stitched. and we see in THE SELVAGE, the title of her last book of poems, another kind of margin, mentioned in FROM THE LIFE OF ST. PETER, the shadow of peter of which the faithful believed possessed healing properties.

A poetry collection of work spanning nearly nearly 40 years for any living poet deserves attention, but Prodigal goes beyond satisfying collector lust. Linda Gregerson's collection represents achievements of concision, owing to her tight verse construction and prosody, but the more enduring rewards are thematic. In "Good News," attention is the prize:". . . Close now, closer than audio enhancement, the frictionless story that washes us clean. Words dis-encumbered of contingency, of history, of doubt. God's wounds, they swore, the old ones, the believers, as now we swear by sex or s\*\*\*, God's wounds, which failures of attention made." The final line lands with a finality made more dramatic by the unanticipated breaks before it. Much of the poetry collected employs the couplet or the tercet, which Gregerson used often in earlier work. As she explained to an MIT forum: "This tercet helped me because of its asymmetry. There's a pivot line in the middle. It gave me a resistance grid through which the syntax could move. I write into this stanza form, and for me that was absolutely essential. The stanza told me where to go. But after two books, I had to leave it because I knew the outcome too well. I had to leave it--sever myself from what had become a kind of life support." At times, she sticks to form where others might not. In the aforementioned "Good News," she created the line ". . . radiant flow of video conversion," but ends the first with a hyphenated "con-" from "conversion.

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