



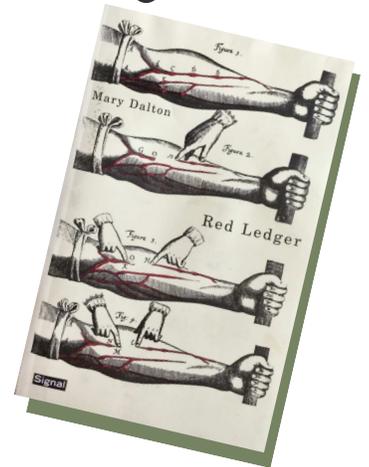
Riddle me this...



with Poet Laureate Mary Dalton

Riddles are a form of interactive poetry—the reader completes the poem by guessing the object or phenomenon which is given voice in the poem. They seem a particularly apt form for now, as we look for connection in all the ways we safely can. And the riddle has long been a vital element of Newfoundland culture; the form powerfully evokes past times of coming together, when, with the hard work of fishing and farming done, people beguiled the winter season with stories and songs and riddles.

"I'm Bursting to Tell," containing 25 riddles, is one of several riddle series I've made. It can be found in *Red Ledger*, published by Vehicule Press of Montreal. Two other riddling series, "Between You" and "The Weather and Waste Ground", have been published as chapbooks by Running the Goat Books.



#1

I'm the conduit of neighbourliness.
At my best I'm hot-tempered.
Alone I grow cold.
In my belly I hold
what will be a stream soon.

#2

I've got my pleat's than a girl's skirt –
And I'm the first to jump up for a dance.
I fancy the swoop, the razzamatazz.
Draw me out at a party
And I'm a real old smoothie.
Ah I'm on to the ins and outs of a tune.
But I'm a touch sort:
Rough handling makes me squawk.

#3

I'm a drifter, shape-shifter;
I'm prone to upheaval.
Now I'm castle, now cathedral.
Although you note my diminishing
there's more to me than meets the eye.

#4

I am the blind one,
the old brown one, knobbed and warty.
In my dusty coat, the earth's eyes.
In my cream innards
I hold a story of water.
Sometimes a faint dark at my heart.

#5

Hubbub's my name;
corrugation's my game.
A burly trailblazer,
I blunder along.
Where I go, brokenness,
a barren new way.

#6

Quite lowly am I –
and yet you bend to me.
Sun and rain made me
a blue globe
with a dark crown.

#7

Four workers, a boss:
five spinning,
stealing the breath
of the spinning one.

#8

Bird-name,
I gleam in high places.
On stone you'll kneel,
pluck out my small red eye.

#9

Birds, boats, crops –
in time I've swallowed all.
I've patted your baby's face,
played hide-and-seek in your lilacs.
You'd do well to mind me.



#10

In wry lines I muster
dreams, lies, enigmas.
Though some scorn me as cipher,
I'm full of grand notions.
I'm bursting to tell –
but I'm mute till you come to me.