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Heresies: The Complete Poems of Anne Wilkinson (1924-1961)
(review)

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refrains such as: 'Cosimo is once again the committed intellectual ... Yet Cosimo fails.' Moreover, in his argumentation he could have eliminated the remarks against ghost critics who supposedly have not understood Calvino.

Bolongaro may have had in mind the article 'Calvino: Keeping in Tune with the Times' (in a collection of essays edited by F. Ricci) when he refers to Calvino 'in tune with' and 'up to date on' cultural theories (from neo-realism to late postmodernism). As stated in that article, the strength of Calvino emerges from his ability to adapt to new cultural changes without ever becoming a chameleon or abandoning his own views on the function(s) of writing. Overall, Bolongaro's study is convincing as it underlines Calvino's commitment to his ethical and cognitive dimension of literature - his 'compass of literature.' One of the dangers in examining Calvino - the writer and thinker - is to isolate his so-called neo-realist phase from his alleged experimental writings and thus to lose sight that from *The Path to the Spiders' Nests* to *Palomar* Calvino was first and foremost committed to a cognitive function of writing in which the mechanisms of *docere et delectare*, fantasy and reality, literature and ideas, and continuity and renewal are masterfully fused as instruments for his unveiling of 'the different levels of reality' and for the 'challenge to the labyrinth' of reality. (ROCCO CAPOZZI)

Dean Irvine, editor. *Heresies: The Complete Poems of Anne Wilkinson (1924-1961)*
Véhicule. 324. \$24.95

When Anne Wilkinson died in 1961 at the age of fifty, she had published two critically acclaimed volumes of poetry and had a third ready for the press. The latter was never separately published, though some of its poems were included by A.J.M. Smith in *The Collected Poems of Anne Wilkinson and a Prose Memoir* (1968). Smith's edition, reprinted in 1990, has until now been the only place, apart from a few anthologies, where readers could find Wilkinson's poems.

With the publication of Dean Irvine's edition we finally have in one place all of Wilkinson's known poems, including the forty-six that Smith knew of but inexcusably omitted from his edition. Unless the early work Wilkinson claims to have destroyed comes to light in some forgotten location, this text will remain the definitive collected edition and should do much to heighten the steadily growing interest in Anne Wilkinson's work.

Irvine's introduction chronicles the development of Wilkinson's poetic career, the difficulties she encountered with publishers, the critical reception of her work, and particularly the reappraisals undertaken by feminists in recent years.

Where this edition takes a new direction is in the textual apparatus that occupies over one hundred pages at the end of the book. Irvine has collated, not always accurately, different versions of the texts, noting variants, revisions, and emendations. This material will be of interest to the specialist, who might be concerned by some obvious errors and omissions. If we look at titles alone we find that 'The Up and Down of It' is incorrectly given in both text and notes; similarly 'On a Bench in a Park' has both title and first line departing from the copy text without editorial comment.

The majority of readers, however, will focus on the poems themselves. The full texts of the volumes published in Wilkinson's lifetime are printed first. In *Counterpoint to Sleep* (1951) and *The Hangman Ties the Holly* (1955) readers will encounter her characteristically sensuous evocation of the natural world, her initial faith in and subsequent disillusionment with what she called her 'Green Order,' as well as her lively, quirky mind at play on witty puns and parody. She engages with both the light and the dark, with joy at life's richness and grief at spiritual, emotional, and physical loss.

The third section contains the eighteen poems of Anne Wilkinson's unpublished volume *Heresies and Other Poems*. Most of the work she gathered for this had been written following fourteen months of mourning for her mother, a time when she was unable to write and when she rejected her faith in the consolations of nature. Irvine's introduction justifies the choice of *Heresies* for his own title, even though there is no extant poem so titled; he convincingly sets out the many heterodoxies (religious, social, political, philosophical, and sexual) implicit in the poems.

The remaining two sections contain poems from periodicals and anthologies, and poems from copy-books. Inevitably there are many more variants to note, as these works were usually still in process. It would have been a most helpful addition to the book to have at least one of the poems analysed in detail, with the versions printed in full and side by side for comparison. An even more helpful feature would have been to give some indication of line numbering in the main body of the text; in a poem such as 'Letter to My Children' which runs to over five pages, it is frustrating to try to identify a particular line.

It is a pity also that there was no space to print each poem on a separate page, as in the earlier editions. More distressing is to find typographical errors in the poems, since these do injustice to the work and could lead to critical misreading. The lovely poem 'Virginia Woolf,' for example, is spoilt by the substitution of 'here' for 'her' in line 6. We may forgive the occasional typing errors in introductory material, but not carelessness with proofreading of the poems.

Despite such weaknesses, this is an important book and a welcome contribution to Anne Wilkinson studies. (JOAN COLDWELL)