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## Review of "So this is the world & here I am in it," By Di Brandt

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*So this is the world & here I am in it.* By Di Brandt. Edmonton, AB: NeWest Press, 2007. ix + 244 pp. Photographs, figures, notes, references, index. \$19.95 paper.

When Di Brandt speaks about poetry and its political dimensions, people listen, sometimes with their mouths agape, at her audacity and at her long looping ecoerotic sentences. Brandt's literary, ecocritical, and philosophical stances are well represented in *So this is the world*, as are her poetics, emphasized here through her reading of the prairie as both aesthetic and consciousness, a local that has much to teach us about the global. The collection is bracketed by two luminous essays—"This land that I love, this wide, wide prairie" and the title essay, "So this is the world and here I am in it"—that meld Brandt's poetics with her politics in the effulgent declaration of prairie eco-poetics.

These situated essays endlessly work and rework the terms of "the land" and "the world"; Brandt's passionate location of her ecopoetic consciousness in the prairie of southern Manitoba can be neither effaced nor dismissed in the collection, the prairie functioning as a subtext to nearly everything she writes. Brandt is perhaps Canada's greatest ambassador of the prairies, working from an ecoliterary version of her Mennonite "radically communist, embodied sensibility," or what we might call the book's central concern of bringing the land back to the world. In essays like "The poet and the wild city," in which she traces the unruly tendencies of nature in an urban environment as a metaphor for spiritual tenacity, and "*& then everything goes bee: A poet's journal*," a remarkable piece examining the role of consciousness in insects and in art, Brandt brings fresh eyes to the use of the local as global. Through it all, she never ignores the powerful place of the literary in her ecocriticism; her radiant reading of Adele Wiseman's *Crackpot* praises the novel's cultural activism and the ribald sensuality of Wiseman's Hoda as "good old Manitoba Mama," a microcosm of prairie urbanism in the ripe body of a female immigrant.

There is a thoughtful reconsideration of regionalism in this collection, but it is neither provincial in scope nor unwarranted in perspective. When Brandt ends the book's first essay with "why I cannot write *the land*," she is consciously paraphrasing her own exploration of writing the maternal in her poem "why she can't write *the mother*" from her 1993 poetry collection *mother, not mother*. The land as maternal beloved is Brandt's most powerful metaphor, and her prairie consciousness offers a lyric humility tempered by a naked despair over the possible loss of the land to a postindustrialized culture.

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