polari

Also by John Barton

POETRY

For the Boy with the Eyes of the Virgin: Selected Poems

Hymn

Hypothesis

Sweet Ellipsis

Designs from the Interior

Notes Toward a Family Tree

Great Men

West of Darkness: Emily Carr, a Self-Portrait

Hidden Structure

A Poor Photographer

POETRY CHAPBOOKS

Balletomane: The Program Notes of Lincoln Kirsten Asymmetries (In the House of the Present and The Strata)

Runoff

Shroud

Oxygen

Destinations, Leaving the Map

EDITOR

Seminal: The Anthology of Canada's Gay Male Poets
We All Begin in a Little Magazine: Arc and the Promise
of Canada's Poets, 1978–1998
belles lettres / beautiful letters
Silences

IN TRANSLATION

À l'ouest de l'ombre. Emily Carr, un auto-portrait

polari

JOHN BARTON

icehouse poetry an imprint of Goose Lane Editions

Copyright © 2014 by John Barton.

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the publisher or a licence from the Canadian Copyright Licensing Agency (Access Copyright). To contact Access Copyright, visit www.accesscopyright.ca or call 1-800-893-5777.

Edited by Jeffery Donaldson.

Cover and page design by Chris Tompkins.

Cover image after a photograph by Russell James Smith, flickr.com.

Printed in Canada.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Barton, John, 1957- author Polari / John Barton.

Poems.

Issued in print and electronic formats. ISBN 978-0-86492-386-8 (pbk.). — ISBN 978-0-86492-718-7 (pdf)

I. Title.

PS8553.A78P64 2014 C811'.54 C2013-907632-8 C2013-907633-6

Goose Lane Editions acknowledges the generous support of the Canada Council for the Arts, the Government of Canada through the Canada Book Fund (CBF), and the Government of New Brunswick through the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture.

Goose Lane Editions 500 Beaverbrook Court, Suite 330 Fredericton, New Brunswick CANADA E3B 5X4 www.gooselane.com

for Alisa Gordaneer, in friendship

Tenderness,
Even to a stranger, corroborates the self.
— Henri Cole

Contents

13 Pre-Avant Seascape

17 Against Reincarnation

- 19 The Book of Marmalade: Its Antecedents, Its History and Its Role in the World Today
- 21 Habitat
- 24 Mill Creek Reverdie
- 26 An Insect's Life
- 27 A Variation on Vincent's Bedroom in Arles
- 31 La vie bohème

. . .

- 35 A Green Man
- 36 Les beaux-arts, Montréal
- 38 Shirtsleeve Weather
- 40 One Bedroom Apartment
 - i What Tempest Within
 - ii From a Portfolio of Japanese Erotic Prints
 - iii Maj. Tom's Cyberspace Oddity
 - iv Peter Fonda and Me
 - v Cavafy's Blinds, an Hour Open
 - vi Donne In
 - vii Like Crane's Heart, Abridged
- 47 A Near Antipodes
- 49 Closing the Gate of Sorrow
- November 22 / Benjamin Britten, Opus 27
- 53 A Built Environment
- 56 Highlights in the History of Concrete
- 58 Polari

- 61 Villeneuve
- 63 Bombproof Your Horse
- 65 The Stray Shopping Carts of Eastern North America: A Guide to Field Identification
- 68 If You Want Closure in Your Relationship Start with Your Legs
- 70 The Trial of Omar Khadr
- 71 Strange Meeting
- 75 People Who Don't Know They're Dead, How They Attach Themselves to Unsuspecting Bystanders and What to Do about It
- 77 Maritime Icarus, June 28, 1838
- 79 Verlaine's Life
- 80 Turing's Machine
- 82 The Trial of Dhuran Ravi
- 83 Criminal Codes
- 85 View Lacking a Frame
- 86 Marathon
- 87 Lattice
- 90 After Hector
- 92 A Shade

•

- 97 1953, Above Katmandu
- 102 Above the Alberta Floods
- 104 Watching the Whale
- 107 On Rereading Margaret Atwood's Surfacing
- 108 At Third Beach
- 110 How to Avoid Huge Ships
- 111 Into the Wild

115 Whale-Watching from Mt. Norman

119 Notes

123 Acknowledgements

