

[EXCERPT]

Madeleine Monette

La mer, au feu

A Sea Fire

Translated by Oana Avasilichioaei

Original engravings by

Véronique de Guitarre

Signum Éditions

Paris, 2017

The poems of La mer, au feu / A Sea Fire were written after Hurricane Sandy struck the East coast of the United States in 2012. As a post-tropical cyclone, Sandy caused a vast fire in Breezy Point, amid flooding at high tide. In a small community by the Atlantic Ocean, not far from Manhattan, houses were flooded and on fire. Another devastating climate spasm. The impact of climate change, flush with earth and sea.

*For Angela and her sons, Ian and
Max, in Belle Harbor*

A Sea Fire

the fire's chill, its odor
of tar and stagnant pools
among the oozing charred
debris, razed scenery sunken
in black water, blurred flat
mosaic of the spongy landscape,
from eroded foundations
to earthy ponds, the devastation
of silted dumping grounds,
remains deposited in the short
memory of fresh mud for novice
archaeologists, beyond
the reckless desires of pillagers

fury of tenacious flares
on the islet of smoky lights,
sudden shifts of russet clouds
and irradiant flashes, the flames
flying from roof to roof, driven
into zigzags by the hurricane,
set off explosions of light caged
inside scorched wood frames,
barely standing, the inferno reigns
encircled by a torrential ocean,
until a still morning of scattered
embers, smoldering mounds
in the sea earth, until the gentle
rare flames that still flicker
in tents of collapsed girders,
dying sighs of sooty marshes

there are fewer last nights
than children in Belle Harbor,
hang on! no drowning or burning,
my little one, hold tight the rope,
trust the human rescue chain, the water
won't erase you with all the rest,
keep moving, stay afloat!
mouth to the sky

around the neighborhood
set ablaze, as the vanished beach
slides towards abyssal depths,
ragged sand cliffs, the caved-in
houses sink, twisted, dismantled,
into an underwater fog crowded
with roofs staircases windows,
jumble distending as it plunges:
the boundary between water
and earth has given way

[...]

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EXCERPT from *La mer, au feu / A Sea Fire*,
translation by poet Oana Avasilichioaei, artist book
with original engravings and collages by Véronique
de Guitarre, Signum Éditions, Paris, 2017.

BAnQ's Artist Books Heritage Collection.

Madeleine Monette

A novelist, short-story writer and poet living in New York City, Madeleine Monette has published the novels *Les Rouleurs* (2007), *La Femme furieuse* (1997), *Amandes et Melon* (1991), *Petites Violences* (1982) and *Le Double suspect* (Robert-Cliche Award 1980), as well as a book of poetry, *Ciel à outrances* (2013), translated into English as *Lashing Skies* (2014). An artist book, *La mer, au feu (A Sea Fire)*, with a poetic suite by Madeleine Monette translated by poet Oana Avasilichioaei and engravings by French visual artist Véronique de Guitarre, was published in Paris in 2017 and is now part of BAnQ's Artist Books Heritage Collection. Her novels and poems were short-listed for many awards in France, Québec and the United States, including the Prix Marguerite Yourcenar (United States) and Prix France-Québec Philippe-Rossillon (France). *Skatepark*, a new edition of *Les Rouleurs*, appeared in Paris in 2015.

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Véronique de Guitarre

A visual artist, Véronique de Guitarre lives and works in Paris. Her work has been shown at the Solidarnosc Museum in Poland, at the Tsuki-no-Niwa Gallery in Japan, at the Galerie du Génie de la Bastille - Editions Signum in Paris (2017); at the Givlowe Gallery in Portugal - *DOK* (2016); at the Pionova Gallery in Poland - *Chantier naval* (2015); and at the Galerie Europa in Paris - *Ports industriels: terrains d'aventure* (2013). She created the engravings, linocuts and collages of many artist books published with Éditions Signum: *La mer, au feu (A Sea Fire)*, a poetry suite by Madeleine Monette, translated by poet Oana Avasilichioaei, with engravings (2017), BAnQ's Artist Books Heritage Collection ; *Un jour, une main / d'enfant s'est réfugiée / là*, poems by Emmanuèle Lagrange and engravings (2015); *Dialogue avec le figuier*, poem by Maurice Gravaud-Lestieux and linocuts (2014); *Observation minutieuse d'un glissement*, poems by Emmanuèle Lagrange and engravings (2013); *The Bed of Flowers*, text by Tanya Mendonsa, photographs by Laurence Toussaint, linocuts and collages (2013); *Les agapanthes*, short story by Anne Bolori and engravings (2011); *Cette ivresse première: être au monde*, 9 poems by Maurice Lestieux and engravings (2008).

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