

Resuscitation, re-creation, recreation: Karren Alenier's *The Anima of Paul Bowles* makes a lyrical dive into the historical corpus of two major 20th century writer/artists, Paul and Jane Bowles. With a close eye on Paul, including many poems about his youth, and a far eye on Paul and Jane's modernist collaborators (cameos include Gertrude Stein, Leonard Bernstein, and Tennessee Williams), the book serves as a fascinating alternative narrative of the modernist era. Alenier deftly balances between various modes - informative, brash, musical - throughout the book, all while creating a narrative that is deeply felt and rooted in a wonder at the complexities of human relationships: "I loved her?" Paul finally asks of his life with Jane. Question mark, indeed. —Amy King, author of *I Want to Make You Safe*

Many have tried to explain the gravitational pull that kept Paul Bowles and his wife Jane Auer in their peculiar orbit. How did that work? Karren Alenier reminds us that all love is as truly incomprehensible as it is powerful. She inhabits these astonishing talents, and makes of their lives a sparkling abstract galaxy of words. —Richard Peabody, editor, *Gargoyle Magazine*

In appreciation for *On a Bed of Gardenias*:

This slim poetry volume illuminates the world of Paul and Jane Bowles, reaching behind the biographies and fictions for a truth, in Paul's words, "truer than the table you can touch." I especially admire the economy of Karren LaLonde Alenier's poetry in dealing with the large psychological issues present in Jane Bowles' puppet play, *A Quarreling Pair*. Alenier has clearly immersed herself in the Paul and Jane legend and lovingly transmuted and deepened it in a language of her own. —Regina Weinreich, documentary co-producer-director of *Paul Bowles: The Complete Outsider*

As someone who spent time with Paul Bowles and has read all of his and Jane Bowles' work, I am impressed with Alenier's ability to transform biography into finely wrought lyric poems of varying styles and textures. Her book, *On a Bed of Gardenias: Jane and Paul Bowles*, contains highly condensed, whip-smart free verse, poems with longer, more conversational lines, poems that dress up as other forms of writing (one with chapters gestures toward the novel and another is in the guise of a letter), a pantoum, and forms of Alenier's own creation. Through ever shifting points of view--third person narrator, Paul, Jane, and Jane's longtime lover, Cherifa--we enter the complex relationship of this dueling and devoted dyad whose creative coupling defies logic and defines need. Alenier has great tonal range--a fitting gift given that between the two Bowles, they produced music, poetry, short stories, novels, travelogues, memoir, and a play. Alenier is also a poet who knows how to tell a story, keeping us riveted right up to the quietly tragic final poem, "Exit Interview." —Brandel France de Bravo, author of *Provenance*