

Summer Isotherms

Let us travel with the pure air
to where the orange
and the lemon tree grow,

where we can map our movements
by silver crests and fine red dust
and the shimmer of stars on fire.

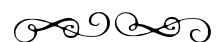
The wind-divide will direct us,
a sharp curve in its backbone
covering us with calm currents

against downpours and cyclones,
fierce continental regimes
that advance with mad bursts

and curse their lack of reach.
The sea lying languid
will be our mirror

and we will float
high above the surface
till we lose the mark of violence

and all life will look at us
and say, that is rare,
that is resistance.



ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

“Summer Isotherms” is crafted from *The Climates of the Continents* (1922) by W. G. Kendrew. About the poem and her process of composition Melissa says:

I was surprised at the richness and scope of the language in Kendrew’s *Climates of the Continents*. In the text, Kendrew doesn’t just describe temperature variations and weather events. He builds sweeping metaphors of controlling regimes, cursed landscapes, monstrous storms, and the people who have to live in, under, and around them. The language drew me in, especially the section on the Mediterranean, an area I visited twenty years ago and have never forgotten. The image Kendrew constructed from his own knowledge and quotations from other observers exactly matched my memory: a color-saturated space of tranquility and light. As I started putting together “Summer Isotherms” from the word bank I chose for myself (the section on Europe, pages 197-261), I found I was writing a story about both loving a little piece of the world and escaping oppression.

Melissa Frederick is the author of *She* (Finishing Line Press 2008), and her work has also appeared in *Oxford Poetry*, *Mid-American Review*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Moon City Review*, and *District Lit*. A freelance medical editor, she lives in suburban Philadelphia and can be found online at *Miss Fickle Reader’s Backwater Domain* (missficklereader.wordpress.com).

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