BOOK NEWS

Poet Mary Rose O'Reilley Looks for 'Junkyard Grace' in *Earth, Mercy*
LSU Press to Publish O'Reilley's Second Collection in March 2013

"The poems in Earth, Mercy *are unsettlingly right. . . . O'Reilley has sculpted these brilliant and unpretentious poems into a book the exact size and shape of the hole I felt inside myself before I read it."—Renée Ashley*

"Sensual, imagistic, surreal in its startling insights and narrative consciousness, this is a book of mercy drawn from the belly of the earth. O'Reilley's pen, like a farm wife's spade, praises the dirt with chants and lullabies, with language so exquisite and powerful her strange dreaming will not let you go."—Todd Davis

Baton Rouge—In her new collection, *Earth, Mercy*, Mary Rose O'Reilley sifts through the debris of human habitation—pink thong sandals, curlers, broken televisions—looking for a kind of junkyard grace: "Holiness enters again / turquoise fins, and the Cessna's carapace / lifts on its wind."

The first poem, "Genesis," locates the reader in Edenic time, "in that humid and green / arrival," while the last, "Watching the End of the World from Hovland, Minnesota," gives nature a final word: "Morels on goat prairie gloat / in their blue light. Spruce / speaking of green on green." Between these points, any poem offers a threshold over which something unexpected may pass—a ghost, an angel, or the yap of an insouciant dog alerting us to apocalypse.

Against all that threatens our survival, *Earth, Mercy* asserts the beauty of our poignantly sensual life.

Mary Rose O'Reilley's first book of poetry, *Half Wild*, won the 2005 Walt Whitman Award of the Academy of Modern Poets. Her five essay collections are grounded in her life as a teacher, potter, musician, Quaker minister, Buddhist novice, and farm worker. She lives in Minnesota, where she tends to animals and organic gardens.