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*The poetry of **Blue Poppy** looks hard and uncompromisingly at human beings caught up in difficult, painful realities. Yet there is always an undertone of irony, a fleeting touch of beauty, poignant and fragile, in the face of an implacable world. Ilona Martonfi's stark, bare-bones style has a subtle power: it juxtaposes series of images, either grey with destitution or coloured with energy, and lets the reader make the connections and absorb the resonance. Her poems are eyes, haunted with feeling, that do not look away.*

—Hugh Hazelton, poet and translator
Assistant Professor, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec

The poems in **Blue Poppy** are authentic and hard-won. They move from the poet's childhood in a war refugee camp to her family's immigration to Canada. These poems also document the domestic journey of one woman—as she lives through an abusive marriage and the raising of her four children. Although the subject matter is both difficult and dramatic, the poems remain affirmative, carefully expressing the poet's experiences with a wry sense of humour and a voice of calmly detached wit. A tremendous first book of poems—this collection by Ilona Martonfi is a memorable one.



Ilona Martonfi was born in Hungary. She spent part of her childhood in a German refugee camp, before emigrating to Montreal, where she spent her adolescence. Her European background, her immigrant experience, and her marriage to an Italian—all of these different languages and locales inform her poetry with an international flavour. Martonfi makes her home in Montreal, where she is an active participant in the literary life of the city.



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