

Sinister Wisdom

A Multicultural Lesbian Literary & Art Journal

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Release Date: January 2, 2015

**Third Sapphic Classic Announced:
What Can I Ask: New and Selected Poems by Elana Dykewomon
To Be Published April 2015**

Sinister Wisdom is pleased to announce its third **Sapphic Classic**, *What Can I Ask: New and Selected Poems* by Elana Dykewomon.

Dykewomon's impressive body of poetry, written over the past forty years, is currently out of print and not available to readers. *What Can I Ask: New and Selected Poems* by Elana Dykewomon will redress this oversight and help bring her important work to a new audience.

What Can I Ask: New and Selected Poems includes poems from Dykewomon's three collections, *They Will Know Me By My Teeth* (Megaera Press, 1976), *Fragments from Lesbos* (Diaspora Distribution, 1981), and *Nothing Will Be As Sweet as the Taste* (Onlywomen Press, 1995). In addition to restoring these poems to print, a generous selection of Dykewomon's newest poetry rounds out the edition. Dykewomon's recent work demonstrates her on-going commitment to thinking and writing about peace, social justice, sexism, and homophobia. *What Can I Ask* also includes an introduction by award-winning writer Jewelle Gomez, an essay by Serbian activist Lepa Mladjenović, and an afterword by poet and scholar Julie R. Enszer.

In her new introduction to this volume, writer and activist Jewelle Gomez notes: "[Dykewomon's poetry] stands as evidence of dynamic political and poetic activism as well as her deep personal commitment to literary craft."

Julie R. Enszer, Editor and Publisher of *Sinister Wisdom*, says: "Lesbian work is too easily forgotten, erased, rendered obsolete. *Sinister Wisdom's Sapphic Classics* series brings important collections of lesbian poetry back into print, making them available to reach new readers. Books by lesbian poets sometimes need time to find their readers—and for their readers to find them. **Sapphic Classics** return them to the world for new discovery and conscious re-engagement."

What Can I Ask: New and Selected Poems will be published on April 15, 2015, simultaneously as *Sinister Wisdom* 96 and a trade paperback book.

Elana Dykewomon is a Jewish lesbian-feminist activist, award-winning author, editor, and professor. Her first novel, *Riverfinger Woman* (published in 1974), was chosen for *The Publishing Triangle's* list of *100 best lesbian and gay novels*. Dykewomon is also the author of *They Will Know Me by My Teeth: stories and poems of lesbian struggle, celebration, and survival* (1976), *Fragments from Lesbos* (1981), *Nothing Will Be As Sweet As The Taste: Selected Poems 1974-1994* (1995), *Beyond the Pale* (1998, winner of the Lambda Literary Award for Best Lesbian Novel), *Moon Creek Road* (2003), and *Risk* (2009). She was a regular contributor to *Bridges*, a magazine of writing by Jewish women, and the lesbian periodical *Common Lives/Lesbian Lives*. Dykewomon's essays have been included in *InVersions: Writing by Dykes, Queers & Lesbians* (Betsy Warland and Valerie Speidel, editors, 1991), and *Fat Studies Reader* (Esther D. Rothblum and Sondra Solovay, editors, 2009). Most recently, Dykewomon was awarded the 2009 James Duggins Outstanding Mid-Career Novelist's Prize. Dykewomon currently lives in Oakland, California. Elana Dykewomon was the editor of *Sinister Wisdom* from 1987 to 1994.

Sinister Wisdom is a multicultural lesbian literary & art journal that publishes four issues each year. Publishing since 1976, *Sinister Wisdom* works to create a multicultural, multi-class lesbian space. *Sinister Wisdom* seeks to open, consider and advance the exploration of community issues. *Sinister Wisdom* recognizes the power of language to reflect our diverse experiences and to enhance our ability to develop critical judgment, as lesbians evaluating our community and our world. Julie R. Enszer is the editor and publisher of *Sinister Wisdom*. For more information: www.sinisterwisdom.org

Sinister Wisdom is available to the trade through Small Press Distribution.

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Sample Poem

Elana Dykewomon

What Can I Ask

It tends to go so wrong
never a woman as strong
as I want them
as brave
– and the brave ones frighten me
What can we ask from each other?

Anytime
ask me a favor
give the favor of this dance
give me the favor of your hand
give me the favor of your faith

What can we ask

Clean up after yourself and don't cost me any money
it's hard enough to take care of me
and feed the dog

And I don't like to be called honey
and ask me out to dinner sometime
and let me trace the smile at the corner of your mouth
let me take photographs of your naked body
and let us rub our bodies together
hold me when I start crying
whisper into my ear that we
will live to see the revolution
stay with me and never say you want to leave
and give me back the poems I've written for two years

And give me the favor of your faith

What can we ask from each other

Be strong enough to be an army
never hand over your power
never go someplace I'm not invited
never act without a reason
think of all the implications

remember to be a comparative shopper
we don't have enough money for guns
we don't have enough money for printing presses
no cash for parks, for children
don't go to the movies
give us your money
don't publish with macmillan
give us your money

What can we ask from each other

Think about the women who have always had less
try not to hate the women with more, reason with them
let us progress to the places reason can take us
it may be useless but

Any woman must answer

If we ask enough from her
if we don't go away

Will you come with me asking

Will you know what to say
will you listen to me beside you
will you tell me stories in the morning
will you bring me a glass of orange juice
will you cherish my body for its weakness and will
for its own shape
for the voice that speaks from it
will you leave me alone now
will you come when I call you
will you hold me to your breast, to the nipple
when I come at five in the morning weeping

What can I ask you

Will you change it with me so that no one comes
at five in the morning weeping
unless they want to
unless weeping tickles them

The weeping has ceased tickling me