



under the influence

by cat mac

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Cat Mac's first collection of poetry, set in Vancouver, B.C. and Mexico, is about a poet who is able to emerge from the trauma of growing up in the sixties in a household with multiple addictions. Not only emerge, but gets out from under the negative influences, comes out as a lesbian, and becomes a healthy, happy poet-singer-songwriter. *under the influence* won the Milieu's National Emerging Writer's Contest presented by Simon Fraser University.

From the author

My father and mother went into recovery when I was nineteen, my sister when I was twenty-one, and my twin when I was twenty-nine. I am interested in how addicts heal through creativity, and because addiction is more prevalent in marginalized communities and I like experimental poetry.

Discussion Questions

1. Can you identify with the poet's experience? How and why?
2. Did you, or people that you know, grow up in a dysfunctional family? If so how did you, or they, cope?
3. Do you know anyone in recovery?
4. Are you familiar with anyone's journey of coming out. Whose and how did that happen?
5. Has history repeated itself in your family?
6. How do you feel about the poet's honesty?
7. What other books have you read that you enjoyed that reminds you of hers?

About the author

Cat Mac, singer-songwriter from Vancouver, BC, is the recipient of Milieu's Emerging Writer's Contest for her first collection of poetry *under the influence*. She has poems from her new manuscript *Emily and Elspeth* in *Queer Chroma* (England), *Rampike*, and *Sinister Wisdom*. Publications include *Event*, *The Capilano Review*, and *West Coast Review*, anthologies include *Exact Fare 2* and *The Fed Anthology* (Arsenal).