

**SCAN Cancer Poems** by **Keith Garebian** — **Dis/Ability series number 22**



*artwork by Keith Garebian*

**DEATH'S HEAVIER THAN SYNTAX**

Hog screaming as a blade slices neck  
impala's hooves kicking feebly as its windpipe is crushed  
fly smudged by my palm.  
What assertive statement is heavier?  
What stronger rhetoric for the joy of being alive?  
Relish it:  
the present sun  
clouds sliding patterns in a blissful sky  
a lingering kiss.  
The self sustains itself  
on fallible words one by one.  
But words cannot refuse  
what's real:  
death's heavier than syntax,  
sonorous phrases,  
structured images.  
  
A neutral god then.

**KEITH GAREBIAN** of Mississauga, Ontario has received plaudits for his poetry collections such as *Frida: Paint Me as a Volcano* (Buschek), *Blue: The Derek Jarman Poems* (Signature), *Children of Ararat* (Frontenac), *Poetry is Blood* (Guernica), and *Against Forgetting* (Frontenac). His ninth collection, *In the Bowl of My Eye*, will be published in 2022 by Mawenzi House. Several of his poems have been anthologized in Canada and the U.S., and one of his Derek Jarman poems was set to music for choir and instruments by celebrated American composer Gregory Spears, in the company of a poem each by Thomas Merton and Denise Levertov. Spears's work entitled "The Tower and the Garden" has just been released on a CD in the U.S.

Garebian is also critically celebrated for his theatre books, such as *William Hutt: Soldier Actor* (Guernica Editions), *Colours to the Chameleon: Canadian Actors on Shakespeare* (Guernica Editions), and *The Making of 'Cabaret'* (Second edition) (Oxford University Press).

**SCAN Cancer Poems**

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