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Made in Michigan Writers Series

The Lake Michigan Mermaid

A Tale in Poems

Linda Nemec Foster and Anne-Marie Oomen

Illustrated by Meridith Ridl

"Deft storytellers, Foster and Oomen bring wit, empathy, and a precise eye for detail as they write of the rituals of family and the sorrows of the dispossessed. A richness of metaphors and a fascination with language pulse in work that deserves an enthusiastic audience."

—COLETTE INEZ, AUTHOR OF *THE LUBA POEMS*

"An earthy, bittersweet fable, told in shimmering glimpses, of four hearts searching for connection -- with each other, and with what is beyond their understanding. Oomen and Foster weave their magical tale out of beach grass and ribbon, out of sorrow and joy, out of water, sand, and ice."

—LYNNE RAE PERKINS, NEWBERY-WINNING AUTHOR OF *CRISS CROSS*

The Lake Michigan Mermaid is a new tale that feels familiar. The breeze off the lake, the sand underfoot, the supreme sadness of being young and not in control—these sensations come rushing back page-by-page, bringing to life an ancient myth of coming of age in a troubled world. Freed from the minds of Linda Nemec Foster and Anne-Marie Oomen, the Lake Michigan mermaid serves as a voice of reason for when we're caught in the riptide.

This is a gripping tale in poems of a young girl's desperate search for guidance in a world turned upside down by family and economic upheaval. Raised in a ramshackle cottage on the shores of Lake Michigan, Lykretia takes refuge in her beloved lake in the face of her grandmother's illness and her mother's eager attempts to sell their home following her recent divorce. One day Lykretia spots a creature in the water, something beautiful and inexplicable. Is it the mythical Lake Michigan mermaid, or an embodiment of the stories her grandmother told as dementia ravaged her mind? Thus begins a telepathic conversation between a lost young girl and Phylidellacia, the mermaid who saves her in more ways than one.

Accompanied by haunting illustrations *The Lake Michigan Mermaid* offers a tender tale of friendship, redemption, and the life-giving power of water. As it explores family relationships and generational bonds, this book is an unforgettable experience that aims to connect readers of all ages.



Linda Nemec Foster is the founder of the Contemporary Writers Series at Aquinas College. She is also the author of nine collections of poetry including *Amber Necklace from Gdansk*, *Talking Diamonds*, *Listen to the Landscape*, and *Living in the Fire Nest*. Foster was selected to be the first poet laureate of Grand Rapids, MI from 2003-2005.



Anne-Marie Oomen is author of *Love, Sex and 4-H* (Next Generation Indie Award for Memoir), *House of Fields* and *Pulling Down the Barn* (both Michigan Notable Books) and *Uncoded Woman* (poetry), among others. She teaches at Solstice MFA at Pine Manor College (MA), Interlochen's College of Creative Arts (MI), and at conferences throughout the country.

Meridith Ridl is an artist and an art teacher with a BA from the College of Wooster and MFA from the University of Michigan. She is represented by Lafontsee Galleries in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Meridith lives with her wonderful husband Brent, in Saugatuck, Michigan and loves wandering the lakeshore and dunes much like Lyk.