Facing the Dragon
poems by
Gilda Morina Syverson

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"'Beauty,' said Gerard Manley Hopkins, 'is always almost gone.' Gilda Morina Syverson recognizes that fact profoundly in her new book of poems, *Facing the Dragon*. The dragon, of course, is death, and here in this passionate circle of poems, Syverson thinks of the self, struggling to find an identity, a calling, before it is too late; she thinks of family, especially her Sicilian family, and how they have disappeared into that other world and how they come back to haunt her, how they come back as messengers from that elusive God we search to name. In dreams and conversations with the dead Syverson plumbs for clues to the mystery. Like the juggler in her brilliant final poem, she keeps five balls in the air, which we as readers can then hold in balance in our own imaginations.

--Anthony S. Abbott author of *New & Selected Poems*, *1980-2009* and *The Man Who*

"Read Gilda Syverson's *Facing the Dragon* and you will know the rigorous pull of this circus we call family, how it frames our identity, how it hurls us back in time to the land of our forefathers--in this case Sicily--where loved ones 'moved together up and down / hills, over the bridge from old town / to new, walked arm in arm...' the way this poet walks so engagingly arm in arm with dream, with memory, with loss, with fear, with those she's loved, living and dead."
--Dannye Romine Powell author of *A Necklace of Bees*

"Readers will discover many fine things in Gilda Morina Syverson's *Facing the Dragon*, including the loving evocations of Italian American family life in the book's second section. But the third and final section is worth the price of admission all by itself: here, in poignant detail and with unfailing compassion, she presents an accumulating montage of death and mourning which becomes, in its refusal of all false and easy consolations, an affirmation of life and the will to endure."
--Michael Palma Poetry Editor, *Italian Americana*

Gilda Morina Syverson--poet, writer, artist & teacher--is the author of the chapbook, *In This Dream Everything Remains Inside*
, Main Street Rag's 2004 Editor's Choice Chapbook Series. Her memoir,
Finding Bottom
, an Italian-American woman's journey to the old country, was a 2010 Novello Literary Award Finalist. An excerpt was published in
Topograph
,
New Writing from the Carolinas,
and the
Landscape Beyond
. Syverson's award winning poems and prose have appeared in literary journals, magazines and anthologies in the United States and Canada, including
Italian Americana, Descant, Cold Mountain Review, Sweet Lemons 2, International Writings with a Sicilian Accent, Accenti, Charlotte Viewpoint, Feile-Festa, VIA
(
Voices in Italian Americana
),
Iodine Poetry Journal,
and elsewhere. Syverson has taught in the Creative arts for over thirty-five years and presently teaches Memoir Writing at Queens University in Charlotte and at The Warehouse in Cornelius. Her commentaries have been aired on WFAE, Charlotte's NPR radio station. In 1979, Syverson received an MFA from Southern Illinois University, and in 2004 she became a Certified Healing

Touch Practitioner.