

Collateral Damage

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This collection deals with humanity's propensity for war and how it has been exercised from 1944 until the present. The first poem, "June 6" compares a ferry ride to Okracoke with the landing at Omaha Beach. It is followed by a narrative spoken by a Korean War veteran whose sons were in Vietnam, moves through the Gulf War to 9/11, Darfur, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Most poems center on the current conflagration in Iraq. Stephen Smith, reviewer for *The [Southern Pines] Pilot*, writes, "Buckner's powers as a poet have strengthened with age. . . . Her . . . stark images and precise language are, regardless of one's political leanings, reason for contemplation -- and celebration. *Collateral Damage* marks Buckner as one of the genre's leading practitioners, a poet whose steady, thoughtful inspiration has been tempered by observation and practice."

Other comments: This country needs more poets like Sally Buckner, poets strong enough, outraged enough, and skillful enough to confront the issue of war and the horrors it brings to the invaders and the invaded. Buckner's outrage never loses its humanity; she brings the brutality of war back home in a down home sort of way, placing it here among us as we go about our daily lives, driving home from work, walking on the beach, sitting down to an evening meal. We are all engaged in collateral damage, even as we think we remain safe from it. These poems tell us the truth: none of us is exempt from war's degradation.

-- Kathryn Stripling Byer, Poet Laureate of North Carolina, author of *Catching Light*, and *Coming to Rest*

Questioning times past and times present, Buckner writes of wars within, wars without. She possesses a parent's grieving eye and a patriot's splintered heart. Her poems probe depths and plead for loving mercies. Her words will not leave you unchanged.

-- Ruth Moose, author of *Making the Bed* and *Rules and Secrets*.