

Tricia Knoll's *How I Learned To Be White*



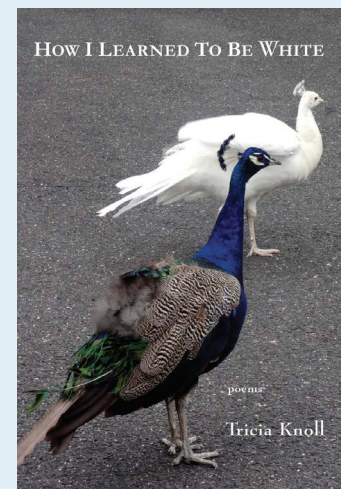
In *How I Learned To Be White*, Tricia Knoll describes how her ancestry, education, childhood and work experiences contributed to her understanding and condemnation of white privilege in a world where discrimination runs rampant. About the book, Judith Arcana writes, “Tricia Knoll has interwoven intimate details and complex emotions from her own past with the past we call history, and she’s done that weaving in poems about how the concept of race is taught and learned in the United States. These poems are about how she grew up, learning as we all do, and how she ‘went another way’ when she understood how she’d been taught to think. She’d grown up – like almost all white people in the USA – among adults who were silent or hiding or lying about racism, learning, as if it were a fact, that white means clean. Knoll’s choice to write about American racism in poetry prompts vivid, sometimes ironic, images: black and white photos, and chocolate cake with vanilla ice cream serve dual purposes in this verse memoir. Here are poems about her earliest encounters with Black people, about her ancestors and immediate family wielding their whiteness obviously or knowingly – as needed. Even in these days of revelation, when the daily news offers literally countless stories of racism in the USA, this collection is notable, valuable because it shows, as the book’s title makes clear, that how we think and feel and behave about race is taught. Tricia deeply felt poems present a hard-won lesson: we can learn, as the poet learned, to go another way.”

Tricia Knoll grew up in Highland Park, Illinois on Chicago’s north shore. She holds degrees in literature from Stanford University (BA) and Yale University (MAT). Her poetry has appeared widely in many journals including *Barrow Street Review*, *Columbia Journal Online*, *Verse Virtual*, *Written River*, and more. Six of her poems have been nominated for Pushcart Prizes. She has spent several years investigating how privilege and race affect her life, work that began after serving on Portland’s Human Rights Commission with special concerns for street people and people with disabilities. She herself suffers from a speech disability. Knoll lives in Portland, Oregon with two dogs and a kind husband. She tends a landscape of Pacific Northwest native plants with gardens devoted to pollinators, roses and organic vegetables. Please visit her website, triciaknoll.com.

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