

ONE WOMAN'S 'NINE HUNDRED MOON JOURNEY'

Mary Lou McAuley publishes her second book of poetry, gives reading April 20 at WineKraft

By HEATHER DOUGLAS
FOR COAST WEEKEND

Astoria poet Mary Lou McAuley, 70, has experienced at least 900 revolutions of the moon around the earth in her lifetime. In a nod to her epic lunar journey, McAuley titled her newest book "Nine Hundred Moon Journey: Poems and Encounters."

The book is a collection of more than 100 poems that range from inward encounters with her own thoughts and revelations, to interactions with others, to visions McAuley has had throughout her lifetime, viewing the world through a poet's lens.

She will read from the book 7 to 8 p.m. Friday, April 20, at WineKraft in Astoria.

McAuley conceived the title on the Astoria Riverwalk one day, when she began to wonder how many moons a lifetime is. After her walk, she pulled out a calculator.

"I like the idea of measuring time this way," she said. "Is the passage of time just weekday to weekend, payday to payday, or are we really part of the natural rhythm of travel throughout our lives?"

Creative integrity

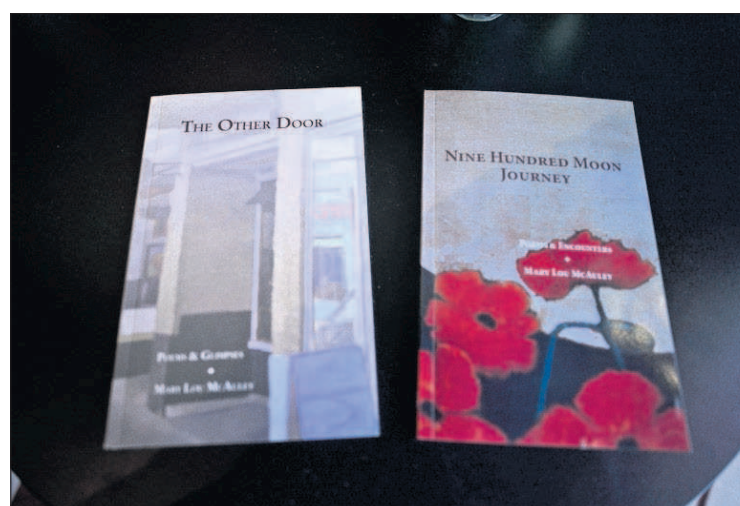
A major part of McAuley's process is simply writing down what she "sees."

"What happens to me is that I see something or hear something, and a metaphor will drop down; I will write that down. I have notebooks of things that I've thought or dreamt, and eventually things surface. Some are instant and on the mark. I wrote the poem 'Susie' just standing there. It's pretty spontaneous, but some poems need more time to percolate," she said.

McAuley emphasizes what she calls "creative integrity," or sticking with an idea and seeing it through. "It's taken me years to have more confidence in the gift of creativity. I think so many times we think we can't do something, but really you're not doing it, you're simply allowing it. Make friends with an idea and walk with it — trust in the process," McAuley said.



Above: Mary Lou McAuley in the Flag Room of the Astoria Library.



Local author Mary Lou McAuley has a new book of poetry out called 'Nine Hundred Moon Journey: Poems & Encounters.' Her first book is 'The Other Door: Poems & Glimpses.'

COLIN MURPHEY PHOTOS

Continued on Page 15