

Poetry confronts realities of multiple sclerosis

‘Intention Tremor’ is the April Coast Weekend Book Club pick

April is National Poetry Month — as if we could confine poetry to a single month of the year. I’ll take any opportunity to proclaim the relevance of poetry, so now that April is here, I’d like to tout a prolific Northwest poetry publisher, MoonPath Press, which moved with its managing editor, Lana Hechtman Ayers, from Kingston, Washington, to Tillamook a couple of years back.

One of the MoonPath’s new books is “Intention Tremor” — a hybrid collection of poetry and prose by Tamara Kaye Sellman.

Sellman was a journalist who embarked on an exciting midlife career change to work with sleep technology — when she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Even so, she gritted through her program, earning two medical credentials and working at a sleep lab for a couple of years.

Since then, she has shifted to a busy schedule as a health care columnist, science journalist and online advocate.

Sellman’s pieces reflect on her diagnosis: “‘Here is the proof,’ Dr. K said, clicking magnetic / scans of my brain, the remarkable white holes, / the countless grains of salt that could grow larger.”

Her work also details what disease progression feels like, as her immune system attacks the protective sheath that covers nerve fibers, disrupting the brain’s flow of information:

“There were stars in my mind’s sky, and then, / one night, there weren’t.”

The no-punches-pulled poems that contain these lines, and Sellman’s other writings, are an affirmation for those who are living with multiple sclerosis and an education for the rest of us.

Readers will learn about the symptoms and syndromes that may arise in conjunction with a multiple sclerosis diagnosis, as well as the drugs that can help stave off the worst effects of the chronic disease.

In “Pill Popper at the Blue Star Diner,” Sellman turns her daily regimen of therapeutic meds into poetry — even as they spill out of her pill box and onto the lunch counter, “escapes shaped as capsules, tablets, / gel caps in orange, white, pink, brown, / or teal ...” and attract the judgment of fellow diners who “stare from behind club sandwich / bites, or forkfuls of fried

This week’s book

‘Intention Tremor’ by Tamara Kaye Sellman

MoonPath Press — \$16

Coast Weekend Book Club

Featuring Tamara Kaye Sellman, author of ‘Intention Tremor’

6 p.m. Wednesday

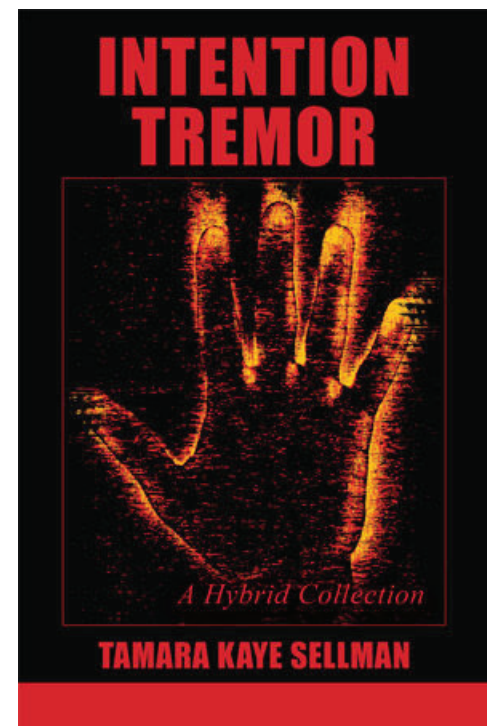
Tune in at facebook.com/coastweekend or on Zoom (Meeting ID: 968 9978 7527, password: 299207)

eggs ...”

In another poem, speaking of herself in second person, Sellman talks about the boon a medication can offer: “You covet your capsule, your personal Hope Diamond.”

Sellman also delves into additional strategies that people living with multiple sclerosis use to cope.

And she speaks to every single one of us in the poem titled “Quarantine.” As someone who is immunocompromised, she practices the necessity of self-quarantining through flu season every year. This poem was written pre-pandemic but Sellman’s acerbic observations about people who eschew science, citing freedom of choice,



will ring true for many more of us now.

“Intention Tremor” is a wake-up call in more ways than one.

The Bookmonger is Barbara Lloyd McMichael, who writes this weekly column focusing on the books, authors and publishers of the Pacific Northwest. Contact her at bkmonger@nwlinc.com

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Brumfield Gallery debuts ‘Brave New World’ show



ABOVE: ‘Just Ducky 3’ by Morgan Brig. LEFT: ‘Float Some’ by Brig.



Brig, as she creates new art.

ASTORIA — Brumfield Gallery’s new exhibit will be on display starting Saturday at 1033 Marine Drive.

The exhibit, “Brave New World,” features new works by artist Morgan Brig, a 3D collage artist. The show will run until June 6. The show is viewable online at brumfieldgallery.com.

Brig’s figures bring “disparate materials to create a unified being, imbued with emotive human expression.” Her art includes symbolic imagery and found objects.