



2014 Jacar Press Chapbook Contest Winner

“Catherine Carter’s poems wrestle with contemporary human dilemmas: identity, aging, nostalgia, desire, as well as our place in the natural world. I’m drawn to her diction, spiky and sharp, grounded in the imagery of experience.”

Joseph Millar

“Call it enchantment or call it witchery, the poetry in Carter’s *Marks of the Witch* creates through its incantatory rhythms and startling imagery a voice that reveals nothing less than the mystery residing in even the most ordinary detail of our daily lives.”

Kathryn Stripling Byer

# MARKS OF THE WITCH

Poems by  
Catherine Carter

## Account

Each heart gets a couple  
of billion squeezing beats, give  
or take, give *and* take.  
Lub-dup, ka-thunk, no pause, no naps  
as it pump-drives closed rivers shiny  
as algae, red as rust, with their splash  
of single-celled fish; when they  
fall still, we do  
too. You can husband  
all those squeezes and clenches,  
make them last. You can pour  
them out faster, a pebbly clatter  
of swimming, kissing, breathing  
in gasps. You get to choose,  
up to a point. In the time you give  
to read this, maybe three  
hundred and fifty throbs: gone.  
Were they well spent,  
are you all right  
with that? I have used  
thousands, now, and hardly missed  
them, mostly to ask you this.