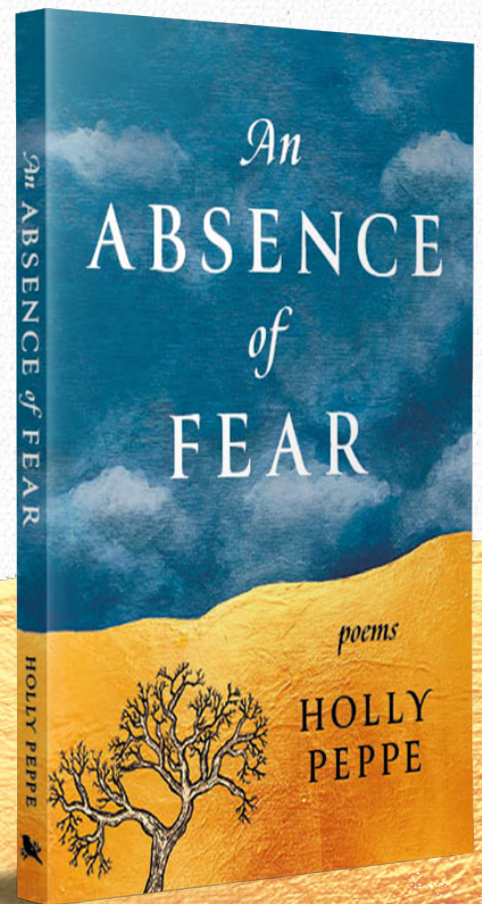


# *An* ABSENCE of FEAR

*A Lifetime of Poems by Holly Peppe*

A brave book by a poet who has spent a lifetime writing about the sustaining power of nature, the importance of family, the thrill of love, the heartbreak of loss, and, finally, the reality of an incurable cancer diagnosis.



*When we are on that cusp, continuing to live and simultaneously die, we are distilled to out-of-body essentials. Mortality, meanwhile, takes on an entity like a Roman god or goddess. It raises its goddess arm, and we become stripped down to memory and the moon.*

*Here in this lifetime of poems, Holly Peppe shows us this simple truth, that we hold within us the significant moments of our observations, those love and have loved, and those who came before us.*

## **From the Foreword by Barbara Bair**

*Barbara Bair is the curator of the papers of Walt Whitman, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Mary Oliver, Ai Ogawa, Muriel Rikeyser, and other poets at the Library of Congress*



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January 7, 2024  
\$14.95 US  
ISBN: 9798891383975

# MEET HOLLY PEPPE



“Holly Peppe is an artist with words. She knows how to work the beauty and power of language.”

—**JONATHAN COHEN** is a poet, translator, scholar, author of *Muna Lee: A Pan-American Life*, and translator of Pedro Mir’s *Poems of Good Love...and Sometimes Fantasy*

**HOLLY PEPPE**—author, poet, editor, teacher, and mentor—is a leading authority and literary executor for the Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Edna St. Vincent Millay. Her critical essays about the poet’s life and work appear in the Penguin Classics, Harper’s, and Yale University Press editions of her poems.

In addition to her literary work, Peppe had a successful 30-year career as a global media, PR, and crisis communications strategist, representing clients in education, arts, health, gender equality, and human rights. She spent eight years in developing countries with ORBIS International before founding her own PR firm in Manhattan, working with a diverse clientele including the UN Office for Children and Armed Conflict and New York Theatre Workshop.

## Poet

As a child  
she spoke in images—

maple trees  
reaching their arms  
to the sky

waves  
shimmering  
like sapphires

Though unwell now,  
she’s still at it:

I’m like a butterfly,  
she whispers,  
pretty in the morning  
gone by afternoon.



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# PRAISE FOR *An Absence of Fear*

**“A delightful and stirring discovery, these love poems and elegies of Holly Peppe. Her gifts as a lyric poet include a rare balance of epigrammatic wit with deep passion and tenderness. Her crystalline stanzas juxtaposing love and death linger in the memory: there is nothing greater we can ask of our poets than such resonance.”**

—**DANIEL MARK EPSTEIN** is the author of twenty books of poetry, biography, history, and the upcoming *Constellations: Collected Poems* (LSU Press, 2025)

**“Holly Peppe’s *An Absence of Fear* is filled with tenderness, undisguised longing for love, and a simultaneous acceptance of, and protest against, death. This book, which we understand as we read will probably be Peppe’s last, wanders the past and the future. Carrying us into death watches and to moments of uncontainable eros, her poems cleave to Malebranche’s beautiful notion that ‘attention is the natural prayer of the soul.’ The casual tone of the final section is in disarming, evocative tension with a cancer diagnosis it both chronicles and defies. There is no bravura, just the courage of someone seeking to describe both the outer and inner worlds with regard and humor.”**

—**CATHERINE BARNETT** is the author of four collections of poetry, including *Human Hours and Solutions for the Problem of Bodies in Space*

**“Writer and editor Holly Peppe has generously given us nearly a hundred heartfelt poems about love and death told with searing honesty and fierce courage as well as penetrating intelligence. Her joy in the beauty of the light or the sky or her lake is poignant as she reminds us that our perceptions, and especially hers, are impermanent and passing.”**

—**LAURIE LISLE** is a biographer and a memoirist whose latest book is *Word for Word: A Writer’s Life*

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