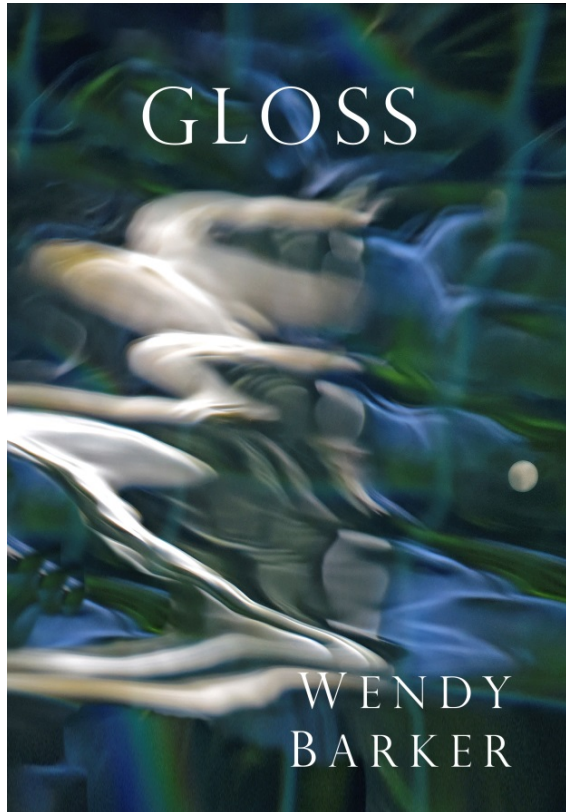


**Houston, Texas – September 6, 2019 – Press Release:** Saint Julian Press is proud to announce a new book of poetry. *GLOSS*, by author Wendy Barker, which will be published on January 15, 2020. Posing haunting questions about the background of Barker's British mother, *Gloss* includes poems in a variety of forms that meditate on a Chinese scroll and on inherited pieces of silver. Other poems "gloss" family memories to reveal underlying meanings of inherited stories, as the book builds to reveal disturbing facts long hidden.



Her touch is as delicate as the family silver, and as tough as the family secrets. Her meanings are as richly ambiguous as the word "gloss" itself, polishing, concealing, interpreting. All those shinings at the surface of things, and all those thready, stony rivulets in a family history, a history of mothers and grandmothers and great-grandmothers and aunts, involving years of posh and poverty—Barker sets them out as on a showcase framed in silk, with the double gloss of precision and compassion.

~ Alicia Ostriker, author of *Waiting for the Light*

In *Gloss*, Wendy Barker meditates on the vagaries of memory, the tidal pull of family lore, the complexities of national identity, and the marvelous, often painful, interactions of three generations of women over many decades. With formal inventiveness, a storyteller's eye for detail, and a profound understanding of the way deep family history lives inside us all, Barker has written a truly memorable collection of poems, one I will return to again with great pleasure.

~ Kevin Prufer, author of *How He Loved Them*

Investigating the currents of her inheritance from England, Barker shows how intricately language and narrative mark identity. Britishisms and Americanisms become entwined in the struggle of women in her family to live according to their own choices. The images speak to one another from inside the lines of elegance versus roughness, and questions of what is genuine. Where there is critical unearthing there is also compassion. The feeling of the book is neither contrite nor without apology. It is the certain fact of being this woman, a poet who summons the figure of Cordelia in understanding how we come to be, despite the fact of not being seen by the objects of our adoration, whose eyes do not know the true heart. In the definite elegance that appears in this poetic appeal to questions of who we are, Barker troubles "*These stories no one speaks. How we're silenced, mute.*" *Gloss* is a splendidly honest work, where the lines breathe courage in the air beyond time.

~ Afaa M. Weaver, author of *Spirit Boxing*

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In crystalline images Wendy Barker unwraps the tightly wrapped package of her mother's story, each layer exposing more and more, as she turns from her mother to her grandmother's disastrous and romantic life, all the while showing how mothers pass on their beauty and fears to their daughters. In this deep and resonant book stories are gotten wrong, nightmares erupt, and secrets can finally be spoken. Barker weaves prose poems and verse into an elegant tapestry of the pentimento of one woman's life.

~ Barbara Hamby, author of *Bird Odyssey*

Wendy Barker's *Gloss* utilizes the lyric form to conduct an archaeological dig, a profound excavation. With wit and candor, the poet unspools the narratives of three generations of women to create a family portrait that is vivid, complex, and sometimes shocking. *Gloss* sifts through the mud of personal history in a quest for the "patterns" that might provide us with answers to the universal question, "how do we become what we are?"

~ Vincent Toro, author of *Stereo. Island. Mosaic.*

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Wendy Barker's sixth collection of poetry, *One Blackbird at a Time*, received the John Ciardi Prize for Poetry (BkMk Press, 2015). Her fifth chapbook is *Shimmer* (Glass Lyre Press, 2019). An anthology of poems about the 1960s, *Far Out: Poems of the '60s*, co-edited with Dave Parsons, was released by Wings Press in 2016. Other books include a selection of poems with accompanying essays, *Poems' Progress* (Absey & Co., 2002), and a selection of translations, *Rabindranath Tagore: Final Poems* (co-translated with Saranindranath Tagore, Braziller, 2001). Her poems have appeared in numerous journals and anthologies including *The Southern Review*, *Nimrod*, *New Letters*, *Poetry*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *Plume*, as well as *The Best American Poetry 2013*. She is the author of *Lunacy of Light: Emily Dickinson and the Experience of Metaphor* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), as well as co-editor (with Sandra M. Gilbert) of *The House is Made of Poetry: The Art of Ruth Stone* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1996). Recipient of NEA and Rockefeller fellowships among other awards, she is the Pearl LeWinn Endowed Chair and Poet-in-Residence at the University of Texas at San Antonio, where she has taught since 1982. Wendy is married to the critic, biographer, essayist, and poet Steven G. Kellman.

**Publication Date:** January 15, 2020.

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ISBN: 978-1-7320542-5-7

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For an advance copy, contact: Ron Starbuck or Wendy Barker

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