Derby Hats

Cobalt Poets Series # 631 ~ September 10, 2024

Cartwheel hats. Feathers and fascinators at Churchill Downs,
each one a ringed planet. Give me the black picture hat, danger
slung over one eye. A hat to stop thoroughbreds in their paddocks.
Not the ¡ay, caramba! hat loud as a multiplex or the upbeat
Breton in pastel straw, but the milliner's best, fabulosa hat
paired with elbow-length gloves. You know the one:
Gloria Swanson's poolside brim taking its place
in the sun. Not the veiled pillbox. Revival peach baskets.
Buckets or cloches. I want the glamorous panther skulking
right in the center of the grandstand. The silk, funereal hat
adorned with nothing but a lethal pin. The merciless hat.
The damned hat blocked on a wooden mold, shaped
to midnight perfection. Hat a villainess wears on coastal drives.
I want the Hollywood hat to motor in. The hat they'll book me in.

Karen Rigby

Photo by Marie-Feutrier

Born in the Republic of Panama in 1979, Karen Rigby now lives and writes in Arizona. Her latest poetry book is *Fabulosa* (JackLeg Press, 2024). Her debut poetry book, *Chinoiserie* (Ahsahta Press, 2012), was selected by Paul Hoover for a 2011 Sawtooth Poetry Prize, and described by Booklist as "poignant, powerful, and urgent." Karen's work has been honored by a National Endowment for the Arts literature fellowship, a Vermont Studio Center Fellowship, and an Artist Opportunity Grant from the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council. She is a 2023 recipient of an Artist Opportunity Grant from the Arizona Commission on the Arts. Her poetry is published in journals such as *The London Magazine, Poetry Northwest, The Oxonian Review,* and *Australian Book Review.* She's read at venues including Rice University, Saint Vincent College, and the Tucson Festival of Books, and serves as an AWP Writer to Writer Mentor. Karen freelances as a book reviewer.