

BROKEN CUP, 2014

Broken Cup brings breathtaking eloquence to what Margaret Gibson describes as “traveling the Way of Alzheimer’s” with her husband, poet David McKain. After his initial and tentative diagnosis, Gibson suspended her writing for two years; but then poetry returned, and the creative process became the lightning rod that grounded her and presented a path forward. The poems in *Broken Cup* bear witness to how Alzheimer’s erodes memory and cognitive function, but they never forget to see what is present and to ask what may remain of the self.

Moving and unflinchingly honest in the acknowledgment of pain, frustration, and grief, the poems uncover, time and time again, the grace of abiding love. Gibson gives heart as well as voice to an experience that is deeply personal, yet shared by all too many.

“Among its many virtues, *Broken Cup* is a great love story, and I’m using the word “great” both carefully and precisely. Gibson’s book traces her husband’s early Alzheimer’s and her soulful attention to him and it. In her title poem, she states if the cause of certain things is beyond us, it’s still possible “to love what is broken.” Not only possible, but “urgent and necessary.” Yet she stringently avoids sentimentality. Her poems have an exquisite lyrical intelligence; they probe with hard-won delicacy. Frost famously asked, “what to make of a diminished thing?” If he had read Margaret Gibson’s poems, he might have had his answer.” --Stephen Dunn, Pulitzer Prize winner

“To make a knowable, shareable harvest from experience otherwise almost uncapturable is a crucible task of poems. Margaret Gibson brings a master poet’s breathtaking eloquence to the witnessed, lived through, resilient intertwining of full presence and love in these pages describing the shared journey of her poet-husband’s Alzheimer’s. *Broken Cup* is indispensable, for both its necessity and its extraordinary beauty. A care-giving friend to whom I showed Gibson’s poems replied with an unsurpassable description: they are “lifeboats of recognition.” In this book, Alzheimer’s has found its voice.”—Jane Hirshfield