



# Inseminating the Elephant (Lannan Literary Selections)

*Lucia Perillo*

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"*Inseminating the Elephant* [is] a collection of poems, often laced with humor, that examines popular culture, the limits of the human body, and the tragicomic aspects of everyday experience."—Pulitzer Prize finalist citation

"These poems are tough and witty."—*The New Yorker*

"Whoever told you poetry isn't for everyone hasn't read Lucia Perillo."—*Time Out New York*

A 2009 Pulitzer Prize finalist, *Inseminating the Elephant* delivers hard-edged yet vulnerable poems that reconcile the comic impulse with the complications and tragedies of living in the eating and breathing body—what Lucia Perillo calls the "meat cage." Perillo dissects human failings and sexuality, as well as collisions between nature and the manufactured world, to create an unforgettable poetic vision.

*How the zoologists start  
is by facing the mirror of her flanks,  
that foreboding luscious place where the gray hide  
gives way to a zeroing-in of skin as vulnerable as an orchid.  
Which is the place to enter, provided you are brave,  
brave enough to insert your laser-guided camera  
to avoid the two false openings of her "vestibule,"  
much like the way of entering death, of giving birth to death,  
calling it forth as described in the Tibetan Book.*

**Lucia Perillo** graduated from McGill University in Montreal and worked for the US Fish and Wildlife Service. She completed her MA in English at Syracuse University, and has published five books of poetry. She was a MacArthur Fellow in 2000 and finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in 2009. She lives in Olympia, Washington.

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