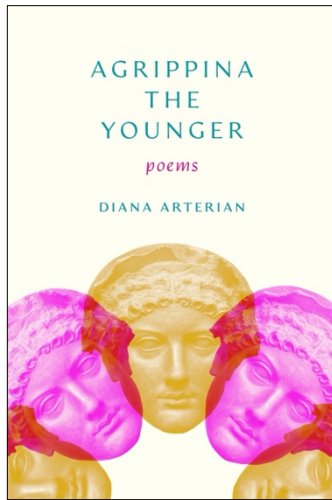




agrippina the younger: poems

diana arterian



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A poetic journey through the past of the Roman Empress Agrippina looks toward the future

Agrippina the Younger follows one woman's study of another, separated by thousands of miles and two millennia but bound by a shared sense of powerlessness. Agrippina was a daughter in a golden political family, destined for greatness—but she hungered for more power than women were allowed. Exhausted by the misogyny of the present, Diana Arterian reaches into the past to try to understand the patriarchal systems of today. In lyric verse and prose poems, she traces Agrippina's rise, interrogating a life studded with intrigue, sex, murder, and manipulation. Arterian eagerly pursues Agrippina through texts, ruins, and films, exhuming the hidden details of the ancient noblewoman's life. These poems consider the valences of patriarchy, power, and the archive to try to answer the question: How do we recover a woman erased by history?

A Ms. Best Poetry Collection of 2024 and 2025

“Diana Arterian was my classmate. With *Agrippina the Younger*, with both its elegance and courage to embrace the history of our darkness—and with such aesthetic muscularity—I am learning from her still. By stepping toward, instead of running from, the ancient histories of women-hatred, Arterian somehow excavates these legacies with a language and lyricism that holds our horror and beauty in sublime balance. “She does not look away...” — **ROBIN COSTE LEWIS**

“In exquisitely braided prose and verse, Diana Arterian gives us an enthralling study of the often maligned and more often overlooked Agrippina the Younger. Necessarily suspicious and critical of official narratives, Arterian dares to “pluck the thread” of time-worn accounts passed down to us from patriarchy. In this stunningly lyrical book—rigorously researched and rigorously imagined—we hear history as lies but also lyre: an instrument, in Arterian's hands, attentively tuned and pitch perfect with song.” — **BRANDON SOM**

“A moving extended meditation on how we attempt to understand our relationship to the historical past. Arterian offers the reader an echo of the explorations that have come before, the complexities, paradoxes, and inadequacies of ‘making do’ with the history we have.”

— **MARY-KIM ARNOLD**



DIANA ARTERIAN is the author of the poetry collection *Playing Monster :: Seiche* and has twice been a finalist for the National Poetry Series. Her writing has appeared in *BOMB*, *The Georgia Review*, *Harvard Review*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *The New York Times Book Review*, and elsewhere. A poetry editor for Noemi Press, Arterian writes The Annotated Nightstand column at *Lit Hub*. She lives in Los Angeles.