



CORINNA WEST

An urban cyclist with prairie pride, a mental health advocate with slam poetry chops, an Olympian judoist who survived suicide and schizophrenia—Corinna West is a uniquely surprising and accomplished human being, arguably a work of art in and of herself. How she communicates her particular world view is in part through the contemporary form of slam poetry, which demands force of personality, power of articulation and meaningful experience from which to speak, all of which West possesses. She takes these poems into the visual as well, turning them into individual photocollages that visualize the prose poetry written across them. Together poem and images speak of West's experiences riding through downtown Kansas City and across the state, delving into the world of chemistry and anti-psychotic drugs, working for the rights of the mentally ill, dealing with a friend's death, and more. They do this through both symbolic and literal means, via images of cloudscares and moving trains, lush prairies and chemical compositions, graffiti and bridges. The compositions themselves, with their hard edges, plain type, and somewhat hodgepodge structure do not ultimately do justice to the force of inspiration and power that the poems—and West herself—contain. How to do that can come—perhaps on a mind-blowing ride, over a bridge on a lone bright gray day, someday.

—Lori Waxman