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Biography of a Unique American Place

“... a great American story.”

—Kathy Fagan, author of *The Charm*

Near the Midwestern city of Newark, Ohio, lies an ancient mystery. Almost 2,000 years ago, native people living in the area began building a complex of earth mounds, creating huge squares, octagons, circles and lines on the land. Several generations committed themselves to this massive project, which eventually covered four square miles. The scale of the Newark Earthworks, as they are now known, is so huge that they can only be fully appreciated from the air. The Earthworks are considered one of the ancient wonders of the world. Yet, despite years of work by archaeologists, the purpose and significance of this landscape-scale geometry remains a profound and unfathomable mystery.

Rikki Santer, in her recently released chapbook, *Front Nine: A Biography of Place*, explores not only the mystery of the Newark Earthworks, but also the subsequent layers of history which have accumulated there. Santer's poems evoke both the wonder of the mounds and her curiosity about the country club whose efforts have preserved this earth structure for more than century; about a Midwestern town which has absorbed the presence of an ancient people into its character; about contemporary native people's connection to the place; and about the archaeologists working to solve its mystery. Author Kathy Fagan writes that *Front Nine* tells “a great American story of native artistry, human ignorance, historical plunder, and ultimately—in Santer's hands—aesthetic recovery” that is both unique to its place of origin and emblematic of our nation's real and complete history.

Front Nine has been praised by Bradley Lepper, Curator of Archaeology at the Ohio Historical Society, and by Ohio State University professor Stephen Kuusisto, author of *Planet of the Blind*. Kuusisto writes that Santer “brings forward true lives, steep loves, exquisite human and natural histories. Her work is sustained by what I can only call “Planetary Faith.” *Front Nine* also features illustrations by Marc Ross, based on historic maps, prehistoric artifacts and the game of golf, which provide a striking visual echo of Santer's poems

Rikki Santer has worked as a journalist, a magazine and book editor, a poet-in-the-schools and a bagel street vendor. Her poetry has appeared in *Ms. Magazine*, *Poetry East*, *Alabama Literary Review*, *Potomac Review*, *Asphodel*, *The Baltimore Sun* and Baltimore's *City Paper*. She holds an M.A. degree in journalism from Kent State University and an M.F.A. degree in creative writing from the Ohio State University. She currently lives in Columbus, Ohio, where she teaches literature, writing and film studies.

Front Nine: A Biography of Place is available for \$12 at local bookstores, through Kulupi Press at www.kulupi.com or by emailing the publisher at sec-dawson@vom.com.

Front Nine: A Biography of Place by Rikki Santer. Original edition. 7 X 8 ½.” 32 pages.
3 illustrations. ISBN: 0-9661867-0-2. Publication: October 2005.

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