

Dot is a 'haven'

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as she glances sideways at her now one year-old daughter, Ita.

As Ross speaks about her life, her face lights up as she recalls the people who championed her through the trials and triumphs. She credits her father, Dr. Charles Ross, a professor of English at the University of Hartford, for early poetic inspirations. "My parents read me children's poems...and I remember my father saying, in a very professorial mode, 'You look at a loose end, Anna. Go off and write a poem,' and I would do it!" she said amusedly.

"I never thought growing up, 'Oh, I am going to be a poet,' but it was always something that I did. And then in high school I won a few student competitions. But by the time I went to college, I was really focused on my writing," said Ross, who attended Mount Holyoke in South Hadley, Massachusetts.

Ross also thanks her husband, Dorchester native Andrew Berg, to whom she has dedicated her chapbook. She is especially grateful for Berg's support through graduate school, which, at first may have seemed like an ill-timed pursuit.

When Ross began work towards her master's of fine arts in poetry at Columbia University in 2001, she and Berg had only been married one month. She arrived to New York just as Sept. 11 occurred. Ross was living in New York four out of the seven days, and commuting back

The following is an excerpt from
Hawk Weather by Anna Ross

EVIDENCE

*The blown ribcage up-ended,
picked white as crocus tips in the long grass,*

*coil of vertebrae extended, skull nosing
the green suggestion of water*

*in the run-off ditch the elk was drinking from
when it fell. You can see our house*

*from here, over the last rise,
its collection of rocks and worry,*

*and beyond it, weather coming east,
skinning the gray jaw-lines of ridges.*

*Do we find these things,
or are they in us like salt and nerve,*

*or the smell of washing? When we turn
back there is a grouse on the path,*

*a frenzy of dust and wing-beat
teasing us on as her four chicks start up*

*out of the brake at our left, hang-uncertain,
then veer away.*

to Dorchester to spend the rest with Berg who stayed here working as a master carpenter. By the second semester, though, she and Berg both relocated to New York. They remained in New York until 2004 when they returned to Dorchester. Since then, Ross has been enjoying the space that this city, and, more intimately, her neighborhood afford her as an artist.

A member of the Dorchester Artists Collaborative and an instructor at Boston University, Grub Street Writing Center, and Stonehill College, Ross is as active in seeking poetic inspiration as she is in encouraging it among her students. "There's an incredibly vibrant writing community here. It's a little bit harder to find your way

into," she said. However, "so many people have been very welcoming to me.

"But in general, I feel as though I have a little bit more space. I can go out, go to readings and feel like I'm making some connections, but I can have time to be at home and do the actual work, which is important. I mean, you can't be a writer who only goes to readings," she said.

Does Ross find Dorchester to be a poetic place?

"It's not like living in the Moors," she said, laughing. "But it does draw forth creativity. There are a lot of artists working around here. It's poetic in that sense. It's a creative community. For me, anyway, it's a place where I can write. It's a haven."