

## Politics of Feminist Revision in di Prima's Loba

Polina Mackay  
*University of Nicosia*

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**Abstract:** In her article "Politics of Feminist Revision in di Prima's *Loba*" Polina Mackay explores Diane di Prima's two-volume epic *Loba* (1998) and, through a comparison of di Prima to the work of Adrienne Rich, argues that *Loba* practices a politics of feminist revision. Further, Mackay examines the ways in which di Prima starts to move away from the recovery project of female voices in patriarchal culture, associated with late twentieth-century Feminism, towards a women's literature which need not be defined entirely through its resistance to patriarchal narratives of gender in men's literature. Here it focuses on di Prima's revisionist critique of another epic by a modern female writer, H.D.'s *Helen in Egypt* (1961), where di Prima rewrites the mythical Helen into a single mother facing modern-day hardship. Mackay concludes that di Prima's decision to appropriate H.D.'s *Helen in Egypt* is suggestive of the politics of feminist revision the author practices. It shows that, in addition to the rewrite of straightforwardly patriarchal narratives, such as the story of Mary in the Christian discourse, a fully revised script of female presence in literature and culture would also have to include a critique of women's literature.

## Polina MACKAY

### Politics of Feminist Revision in di Prima's *Loba*

It is obvious to anyone browsing through the 200 or so poems which comprise Diane di Prima's two-volume epic *Loba* (1998) that the focus of the work is the woman. One clear indication for such an assumption are the many female characters who appear in the poems; among them, Eve, the Virgin Mary, Helen of Troy, Demeter, Persephone, Lilith, Isuelt (Isolde), Heloise and many more. In a poem towards the start of Book I, many of these figures come together, their names making up the lines of the poem with very few words added and no punctuation to separate them (54). It would seem a deliberate attempt is being made here to unite them all as one being. This aim seems fitting as the book has a frame narrative: the story of the loba, the she-wolf, a half-real and half-imagined mythical creature who is formed throughout the poems, first as an animistic woman and then as a being who contains the soul and consciousness of all women. The intention to create an all-woman, as it were, is evident in the first poem of *Loba*, a piece which appears as a sort of preface-poem to Book I. The poem hails the "lost moon sisters" who share similar experiences as they wander through the earth. The speaker seeks them out by calling their names, by reaching out to each one of them and more so to the loba, the she-wolf, who she calls her "mirror image and [her] sister" (5). The speaker recognizes and, most importantly, articulates the need for community in a section towards the end of the poem which merges the "I" with the "you": "I am you / and I must become you / I have been you / and I must become you / I am always you / I must become you" (6). The poem's final stanza is an incantation ("ay-a / ay-a ah / ay-a / ay-a ah ah / maya ma maya ma / om star mother ma om / maya ma ah"), a series of words chanted as if in a magic spell, a highly ritualistic moment which celebrates the community of the lost moon sisters to which the speaker has just been led by the loba.

It has been suggested in a recent analysis of this poem that it reveals di Prima's feminist aesthetic evident not only in the poet's insistence on the merits of community building, but also in her refusal to edit out of the work the material conditions of the lives of women (Quinn 22). Indeed, the poem talks about the lost moon sisters who wander pregnant, barefoot and "battered by drunk men," "digging for yams," "looking for dope," "playing with birds" or "chipping at stone" (4-5). di Prima seems to reiterate Adrienne Rich's point in her well-known piece "Notes toward A Politics of Location" (1984), published more than a decade before the publication of *Loba* in 1998, which highlights the significance of women's day-to-day experiences in the context of a feminist rethinking of gender. Rich suggests that there is an urgent need in feminism to ask questions, such as: "where, when, and under what conditions have women acted and been acted-on, as women?" (230). Rich also brings attention to the diversity of women's experience. In a passionate paragraph towards the end of her piece, she talks of the plethora of women's lives: "In almost everything I read these days there are women getting up before dawn, in the blackness before the point of light, in the twilight before sunrise, there are women rising earlier than men and children, to break the ice, to start the stove, to put up the pap, the coffee, the rice, to iron the pants, to braid the hair, to pull the day's water up from the well, to boil water for tea, to wash the children for school, to pull the vegetables and start the walk to market, to run to catch the bus for the work that is paid" ("Towards a Politics of Location" 238).

In a similar fashion, di Prima's "O lost moon sisters" refers to women's work—digging for yams, chipping at stone—with specific emphasis on the diversity of that experience. What is more, like Rich, di Prima incorporates into the poem the material conditions of the lives of non-white women, referring in one instance to women of Native American origin (5). These inclusions occur throughout *Loba*, making the same political point as Rich's essay: that womanhood should not be seen only through the prism of white middle-class feminism, and that the idea that it can speak for all women is a dangerous misconception. This nod to Rich in *Loba* is suggestive of the kind of feminism di Prima practices in her poetry. Like Rich, di Prima's work is centered around a politics of revision whereby the female voice might emerge as an amalgamation of female histories of resistance and attempts at community building. In this study, I focus on di Prima's appropriation of straightforwardly patriarchal narratives in *Loba*, including examples of her reworking of Beat texts from the height of the Beat era. I also discuss di Prima's revisionist critique of a significant feminist text by a female author, H.D.'s *Helen in Egypt* (1961). Obviously, revisionism from a feminist perspective was not invented by di Prima nor is it practiced only by her. But where does di Prima and *Loba* fit with a tradition of feminist rewriting? In what ways does she herself rewrite what she inherits? A politics of revision has been a central axis of the feminist movement throughout the twentieth century. Early on in the history of twentieth-century feminism, Dorothy Richardson notes the significance of making new versions of existing structures; she writes in her Foreword

to her novel, *Pilgrimage* (1938): "Since all these novelists happen to be men, the present writer, proposing ... to produce a feminine equivalent of the current masculine realism" (151). At the height of second-wave feminism in the 1970s, the idea of revision as a politics of writing was taken up by many female authors to advance a woman's literature with distinct aims. The central example in this body of work, as mentioned earlier, is the work of Adrienne Rich and, in particular, her 1971 essay on "Writing as Re-Vision." Summarily, Rich suggests that women's writing does and has to engage in an act of looking back to old narratives within the context of new critical frameworks. Rich illustrates this argument in her poetry from the same period and, most vividly, in her collection of poems, *Diving into the Wreck: Poems 1971-1972* (1973), which offers poems of transformation. In the title poem, the strongest in the collection, the female speaker dives into a wreck in a journey of self-discovery which quickly turns into a re-visioning of mythical stories. As Rachel Blau DuPlessis perceptively observes of the poem: "Rich is tapping the energies and plots of myth, while re-envisioning the content. While there is a hero, a quest, and a buried treasure, the hero is a woman; the quest is a critique of old myths; the treasure is knowledge: the whole buried knowledge of the personal and cultural foundering of the relations between the sexes, and a self-knowledge that can be won only through the act of criticism" (295).

Rich's *Diving into the Wreck* is merely one example in a long line of revisionist narratives which flourished in the 1970s. Many of these choose to focus specifically on the revision of myths and fairy tales. A good example of this type of work is the fiction of Angela Carter and, in particular, her collection of short stories, *The Bloody Chamber* (1979), which consists of complex retellings of familiar fairy tales. Many of these are narrated from female perspectives, among them the title story which rewrites the tale of Bluebeard retold from the perspective of his last bride. However, Carter's stories are not straightforward reversals of the sexual mythologies of popular fairy tales. They are complex explorations of desire co-dependence, pain and violence. In "Snow Child," a vivid example of the complexity of Carter's rewrites, the figure of Snow White is transformed into a young girl hated by the Countess and sexually desired by the Count who violently rapes her as she lies dead on the snow. Another example of revisionist literature by women, which is closer to the tradition di Prima is writing in, is the work of American poet, Anne Sexton. Sexton's contribution to the feminist rewriting of fairy tales and myths primarily comes in the form of a collection of poems entitled *Transformations*, which was first published in 1971. Sexton discusses the polemics involved in her act of revision in a letter to Kurt Vonnegut, in which she asks him to write an introduction telling of the value of my (one could say) rape of [these fairy tales]" (*Anne Sexton: A Self-Portrait in Letters* 367). Indeed, one of the most striking poems of the collection, "Cinderella," departs from the original story so radically that it feels, to this reader at least, that an "unlawful" act has taken place. For instance, the figure of the kind fairy is rewritten as the spirit of Cinderella's dead mother disguised as a vengeful turtledove who pecks the stepsisters' eyes out. Beyond the obvious horrification of the Cinderella story, Sexton attempts to illuminate the desire for conformity which lies at the heart of the original story, a narrative which has every young woman wishing to marry well. Thus Sexton's poem ends with Cinderella and her Prince living "like two dolls in a museum case," trapped in what seems like a meaningless marriage, "their darling smiles pasted on for eternity" (56). Sexton's final image depicts conformist culture, with heterosexual marriage at its center, as the last act in a long line of horrors. Both of these examples, Carter and Sexton, rewrite patriarchal narratives of male/female relationships from new perspectives and, in doing so, "discover new possibilities of meaning," as Alicia Ostriker has argued of this type of work (11).

As in Carter and Sexton, many of the poems in *Loba* are clear rewrites of existing stories, which have contributed significantly to patriarchal culture's narratives of gender. One obvious example is di Prima's revision of *The Seven Joys of the Virgin*, a devotion to the events of the life of Mary made popular in medieval art and literature, narrating the Annunciation, the Nativity, The Adoration of the Magi, the Resurrection, The Ascension of Christ to Heaven, The Pentecost and the Coronation of the Virgin in Heaven. As evident in the narrative arch of these parts, Mary goes through a spiritual journey starting from the moment she is chosen by angel Gabriel to carry the son of God and ending in her divination and ascension into Heaven. In this story, Mary is an obvious corrective to Eve, the first woman. Unlike Eve, Mary gives birth not to sinful humans but to humanity's savior and, unlike Eve, she is worthy of a place in Heaven. di Prima's version, which shares the same title as the original narrative, consists of ten poems. It echoes the structure of the original trope as it starts with "Annunciation" and ends with "Coronation," but other poems are inserted between these two which are not related to *The Seven Joys*. di Prima tells the story of Mary somewhat differently. In the "Annunciation," di Prima has Mary describe her encounter with angel Gabriel as "an assault I / bent under." The angel seems to her to be possessed by a "murderous rage" as she is completely overtaken by fear (*Loba* 101-03). The white lily, which in the Christian story is a symbol of love and purity, becomes a visual manifestation of Mary's submission:

"the lilies / bent of themselves, my body / bent under weight of robes" (102). Mary does not emerge from this submissive role until "Coronation," the final poem of this section, but only to find herself standing at the iron gate of Heaven. Interestingly, here she does not stand as the mother of the son of God or as the impending Queen of Heaven. di Prima chooses to stress her humanity instead by having her say that "I stand in these structures of angelic sound / alone as any woman in her doorway / in the rain" (117). This comment suggests that di Prima writes against the Christian discourse of Mary's divination, a point which is underpinned by what happens to Mary after her coronation. She is depicted in terms of loss and failure, seeing herself "lack[ing] / even the grace of that girl / who bent to angels" (118). In what seems like an inevitable outcome of di Prima's rewrite, her Mary in Heaven starts to dream of her freedom, ending her narrative with this prediction: "I will fly / Broomless, unarmed, unready / I will fly" (119). This ending illuminates di Prima's revisionist politics. As Rich has suggested of this critical practice, di Prima's rewrite of *The Seven Joys of the Virgin* exposes and challenges the submissive roles which the woman has been assigned, and expresses the possibility of freedom from such bondage. In this specific example, di Prima's bone is with Christian discourse, one of the master-narratives of patriarchy. Her aim is not to just unveil the patriarchal attitudes of this discourse but also to deflect it entirely. This is why her "Seven Joys of the Virgin" are intercepted with poems which bring in elements offering alternative narratives to those of Christianity. For instance, her version of the "Nativity" chapter starts with a quotation from *The Edda*, a collection of old Norse poems. The lines di Prima quotes refer to the creation myth from Northern mythology, which the poet expands in the first stanza by asking more questions about specific incidents in the story (*Loba*, 107-08). The point di Prima brings home here is that there are other versions to the Christian narrative of creation—or salvation for that matter—just as there are alternative histories of the woman's place in them.

Besides the affinities with feminism, di Prima's work has been rightly associated with the Beat Generation not only because she happened to be in New York in the 1950s living the life of a Beatnik poet (as she documents in her memoir of that time, *Recollections of My Life as A Woman* [2001]). Her poetry, as many have already noted (Libby 45-68; McNeil 178-99), expresses the female artist's desire for beatitude, a search for spiritual fulfilment in the beauty of art. di Prima charts Beat bohemia for women, bringing into play specific questions to do with female experience. For instance, her first collection of poems *This Kind of Bird Flies Backward* (1958) ends with a pregnancy and the promise to the unborn child of a Beat bohemian life filled with literature and art. This early work highlights the significance of gendered responses to the Beat narrative of freedom from the bondage of conformity. The emphasis on the difference between a male and a female response to resistance is also evident in *Loba*, not just in the poems which are openly about female experience, but also in the work which responds specifically to what we might call the Beat legacy from the perspective of a female author.

One of the collection's finest pieces, "The *Loba* Recovers the Memory of a Mare," is modelled upon the Beat movement's most influential poem, Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" (1956). Here di Prima repeats the form and content of Ginsberg's poem with long breath lines, linked by the word who, and an array of subaltern characters that go against a culture of containment. The lives di Prima depicts resemble the Beat experience described in "Howl": there are those who are hunted down; those who die a lonely death, "o-d'ing in methadone jail"; those who are anarchic and graffiti "save yourself" in lipstick; or those who seek and find love, beauty and salvation at the most unlikely places—"in love again peaceful scrawled candle smoke 'there is / salvation' triumphant on borrowed ceiling / while friends coughed in the kitchen" (125-26). di Prima's subject, however, is the woman evident immediately in her choice of animal in the title—a mare—which is a female horse. Furthermore, the last few stanzas speak exclusively of female experience: "& who now remembers her hands / working dye into cotton / slant of her green eyes / Sagamore cafeteria / who has tears for girls now on Route One, the babies / wrapped in a scarf / the green / always further north / further than you can walk" (127).

As we have seen previously of di Prima's work, women for the poet have to be linked to their everyday lives which they lead in a gendered world. Thus the female experience in this stanza is of "working dye into cotton," a manual job traditionally associated with women, or of looking after babies. The poem asks questions of the stereotypes of gender which help to make a gendered world: "Oatmeal & grits while the old man / naked in bed / read Bible / jerked off / & who was the whore of Babylon in the / kerosene lamp of yr childhood?" (126). What is the purpose of this questioning? di Prima's choice to echo Ginsberg's "Howl" provides a partial answer. "The *Loba* Recovers the Memory of a Mare" goes some way towards feminizing the cry, or the howl, against conformity by narrowing down the focus on the women whose struggle has been the same (who have also "walked across America behind gaunt violent yogis" [125]), but the memory of that struggle is either only partially recorded or entirely ignored. In a move consistent with second wave feminist strategies, di Prima speaks of a recovery of the memory of the woman's past, and in doing so she, as Tony Trigilio rightfully notes, "suggests the recovery of a

female Beat tradition as it questions the male-centeredness (or male dominance) of this tradition ... suggesting that a Beat tradition that has been dominated by men and professes to speak beatifically for the entire world is an outlaw tradition that simply does not go far enough in its outlaw response ("'Who did we pray to?' Diane di Prima's *Loba*").

At the center of di Prima's response is a politics of representation which is close to the form of resistance to male dominance practiced in French feminism. In "The Laugh of the Medusa," for example, Hélène Cixous talks of the possibilities awaiting women if they are freed from the constraints of patriarchy. This new life for women would center on experiencing the world primarily through their bodies and through writing in *écriture féminine*, in woman's language. These practices would eventually lead to total liberation from patriarchy. This is the sort of boundlessness that di Prima seeks in ending her poem with "[the woman's] ankles fragile / unrooted, she walks / into the Wind" (127). Her *loba*, however, remains grounded in a history of female resistance: the fact that "The *Loba* Recovers the Memory of a Mare" is an obvious response to Ginsberg's "Howl" illuminates the need for a politics of resistance specific to a particular discourse and thus speaks against a boundary-less essentialism of feminist revisioning. I shall return to di Prima's response to Ginsberg later on; first, it is important to see this response in the context of the book's wider aim, which is to probe into the nature of modern female authorship. Besides the poem's relevance to the history of female authors' response to the Beat movement, "The *Loba* Recovers the Memory of a Mare" is also highly suggestive of a more significant aim of *Loba*, which is to go beyond the act of primary revision (the rewrite of patriarchal narratives from female perspectives), and think through the nature of female authorship and, more specifically, the writer's place in the tradition of women's literature. This goal of the collection becomes clear when we consider the poet's references to and revisions of texts written by female authors who were as invested in the critique of patriarchy as di Prima is. The best example in *Loba* is di Prima's response to modernist feminist poet, H.D., who was a major source of influence for di Prima from early on in her career (see di Prima's "The Mysteries of Vision: Some Notes on H.D").

A major source text in *Loba* is H.D.'s *Helen in Egypt*. This is a significant artistic choice which di Prima makes, for H.D.'s text is already a revisionist narrative. *Helen in Egypt* rewrites Euripides' story of Helen, itself a rewrite of Homer. In Euripides, Helen is not taken to Troy but to Egypt instead and the Greeks and Trojans end up fighting for a woman who is not even there. H.D.'s own version of the myth similarly places the real Helen in Egypt and creates a visible, speaking phantom, "an illusion" (1) of Helen on the wall of Troy. Much of the text is devoted to the phantom's thoughts as she gazes at the battlefield; but equal space is dedicated to the way others see her, principally Achilles, who is her main love interest in H.D.'s story. This doppelgänger and the many other versions of Helen through others' eyes allow H.D.'s poem to initiate a series of questions. Who is the woman for whom the Greeks fought? How will her story end? Which narratives of gender fit her best? Which female binaries fit her best? "Was Helen daemon or goddess?" (*Helen in Egypt* 231). However, rather than answering these questions directly, H.D. is much more invested in ambiguity, doubleness and visionary questioning. She writes towards the start: "Alas, my brothers, / Helen did not walk / upon the ramparts, / she whom you cursed / was but the phantom and the shadow thrown / of a reflection" (*Helen in Egypt* 5). H.D. spends much time in exploring the notions of phantom, shadow and reflection as doubles which challenge the reality of the real. Of course, metafictionally, these doubles stand for the many different versions of the stories of Helen told throughout the centuries, H.D.'s own joining an existing chorus. The doubles also serve to create more Helens—more models of femaleness. Towards the start of the book, H.D. draws attention to this plurality in a speech by Helen talking about the many versions of her Achilles is yet to encounter: "for I knew him, I saw in his eyes / the sea-enchantment, but he / knew not yet, Helen of Sparta, / knew not Helen of Troy, / knew not Helena, hated of Greece" (14). Because of the inherent ambiguity and deception in shadows or reflections, these models are never complete. As many more voices come into H.D.'s poem—Achilles, Zeus, Aphrodite, Paris—the story is told again and again, as if the phantom of Helen is forever projected onto the wall of Troy for everyone to see and interpret. The process goes on, as it is fitting for an epic poem, until Paris comes to challenge its central premise, which is the love between Helen and Achilles, the only constant in a discourse where everything is questioned, doubled or negated. Paris says, "you say you did not die on the stairs, / that the love of Achilles sustained you; / I say he never loved you" (*Helen in Egypt* 144).

In a three-line stanza, H.D. challenges the basic premise of her own story to make room for the epic's final part. Entitled "Eidolon," ancient Greek for an image or representation, a phantom or apparition, the finale disregards the need for story in the epic genre and focuses instead on a philosophical exploration of the meaning of "eidolon." Here Helen is depicted as both an idol and as nothing like the woman who everyone adored or hated; she is "an image, an idol or eidolon, not much more than a doll" (244) but, nevertheless, awakened and able to see the "script" or "pattern" of her narrative (262-63).

H.D.'s *Helen in Egypt* ends by empowering Helen as she is gifted with the ability to see, or rather envision, her story. di Prima makes explicit references to H.D.'s *Helen in Egypt* in two poems appearing in Part 5 of Book I. The first poem starts in the same way as H.D.'s epic by placing Helen on the wall. In the second line of the poem, however, di Prima already departs from H.D.: "Helen on the wall / not real, not eidolon / sung, shimmered as a shell / of tortoise, heart / of abalone, wind / in the northern spruce" (*Helen in Egypt* 79). For di Prima, then, neither is Helen real nor is she a praised eidolon. On the wall, this Helen does not unfold into many guises, shadows or reflections as H.D.'s Helen does; on the contrary, di Prima's Helen only shines faintly. This crucial difference shows di Prima's Helen as disempowered made to look fragile and elusive—hence the comparison to the shell of a tortoise and the wind. By contrast, H.D.'s heroine is empowered as a multilayered presence. Why does di Prima instigate this change? After all, to have likened her polymorphous loba-as-Helen to H.D.'s equally diverse Helen would have been quite fitting. I believe the answer lies in the second part of the poem. Here di Prima's Helen states that "none the less, wraith, eidolon or woman / I walk that wall" (80), and in one statement erases the dichotomy H.D. attempts to explore, Helen as both real and an apparition or as neither nor, or somewhere in between. For di Prima it seems these boundaries or confections are unimportant; what is significant is the fact that Helen walks the wall. To bring this point home, the rest of the poem concentrates on Helen's walk, the direction, the pace, the noises and the light on her feet. The purpose of this focus is to illuminate the physical experience of women, an emphasis which is made even more apparent in the last difference di Prima introduces in this poem between her and H.D.'s Helen. di Prima's Helen on the wall is neither loved nor admired by Achilles, Paris or any other Greek or Trojan nobles and soldiers. di Prima's Helen is "shivering loveless" "wrapping the infant in [her] silver robe" (80). This Helen is a single mother and, in her lonely walk along treacherous paths with a defenceless child in her arms, she resembles not Helen but Mary or any woman who had to fend for herself in a hard world. "This," the poet tells us in the final line, "is Helen's tale" (80, my emphasis).

Di Prima writes against the myth of Helen as set in H.D.'s revisionist text. In H.D., Helen is a doppleganger who challenges the real; her very existence questions the reality of Helen and, by association, the validity of the patriarchal myths about Helen, which mainly conceptualize Helen as the ultimate beauty, a seductress and an adulteress, all qualities which lead to tragedy. In di Prima, Helen is once again a real woman experiencing life not through metaphysical events, such as the love or wrath of Gods, but through happenings which might occur in many women's lives, such as the birth of a child. What is more, di Prima's Helen is not in search of a myth. This is abundantly clear in a poem which appears right at the end of *Loba*. The epigraph asks, "What myth are you living?"—a question which the poem answers clearly: "There is no myth / for what I am living now ... / There is no myth / for this older, ample woman ... / You no longer need/ to claim it" (305-07). Here di Prima moves away from the recovery project, associated with second wave feminism, towards a women's literature which need not be defined entirely through its resistance to patriarchal narratives of gender in men's literature. In this context, it makes sense that di Prima turns to H.D.'s *Helen in Egypt*, a gender-centered text by a female author, as a source narrative to write against. H.D.'s text, a revision narrative itself, enables di Prima to build on from a tradition of feminist revisionism. Since the feminist writer who precedes her has already appropriated the myth of Helen by placing more emphasis on her perspective and by challenging the existing narratives about her, it makes sense that the younger female author of the next generation would build on the existing tradition of feminist appropriation, and depart from it.

di Prima's decision to appropriate H.D.'s *Helen in Egypt* is suggestive of the politics of revision the author practices. It shows that, in addition to the rewrite of straightforwardly patriarchal narratives, such as the story of Mary in Christianity, a fully revised script of female presence in literature and culture would also have to include a critique of women's literature. Through the latter, the contemporary woman author can build on an existing tradition which does not primarily define itself against the narratives it opposes. The next generation can both resist and begin to build a more diverse, independent tradition. It is in this context that di Prima's response to Ginsberg's "Howl" in "The Loba Recovers the Memory of a Mare" is significant, for it has a double purpose: it rewrites "Howl" from the perspective of a woman and, simultaneously, integrates her experience of discontent into the Beat message of anti-conformity. The two do not necessarily sit well together as female beatitude here remains "just out of reach" (*Loba* 125) or perhaps occurring off stage as the woman in the end "walks / into the wind" (127). While "The Loba Recovers the Memory of a Mare" is a clear rewrite of "Howl," it is not at all clear what the parameters of this revision might be and who this newly formed loba, with the fully recovered memory of the woman's past, might be affiliated with and where she might be heading. At the end, di Prima chooses to accept a new reality which contains at its core a woman's discourse, resisting the temptation to polemicize her response to Ginsberg. What she has crafted instead is acceptance of ambiguity, evident both in her response to Ginsberg and in the final scene of her appropriation of the story of Helen. This

sense of unknowingness with which the book ends makes sense metafictionally since di Prima is still meant to be writing Book III of *Loba*.

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Author's profile: Polina Mackay teaches English literature at the University of Nicosia. In addition to numerous articles, Mackay's book publications include the single-authored book *Feminism and Gender in Beat Women* (2017) and the co-edited volumes *Authorship in Context: From the Theoretical to the Material* (2007), *Kathy Acker and Transnationalism* (2009), and *The Cambridge Companion to H.D.* (2011). Email: <[polinamackay@gmail.com](mailto:polinamackay@gmail.com)>