

## SANDRA IVANY

*emerging light, big sur*, 2012  
photographic print, 16 x 24 in



courtesy: the artist

## JUDITH BARRINGTON

### Japanese Garden, Oregon

*“Beware in the blind wall a gaze that watches you ...  
in the obscure being dwells a hidden God ...”*

—Gérard de Nerval, *Les Chimères* (1854),  
translated by Robert Duncan

**Judith Barrington** is the author of three volumes of poetry, including *Horses and the Human Soul*, and two chapbooks, including *Postcard from the Bottom of the Sea*. Her *Life-saving: A Memoir* won the Lambda Literary Award, and her *Writing the Memoir: From Truth to Art* has been a bestseller in the United States, Germany, and Australia. She lives in Oregon.

In the presence of the dead—those guardians  
of tradition—children shout at the koi and the dead  
laugh from inside the koi’s mouth.

In the presence of the dead—candles that float  
on the water—a worker in blue trousers  
sweeps gravel and the souls murmur well done.

A borrowed forest looms darkly above living stones,  
dying humans, bandit raccoons biding their time  
for a fish snack. The borrowed forest is outside

yet still part of this crafted world that no one can  
quite contain, not even the departed who wander  
more jauntily than we who cannot listen to a stone.

They watch us—those dead—from inside their blind wall,  
“a hidden God” some think is there—but not me:  
spirits are ordinary, everywhere, lurking like a joke.