

## **Marilyn Dumont: Metis Poet.**<sup>1</sup> (b. 1955)

Marilyn Dumont is of Cree/Metis ancestry. Since 1985, Marilyn has been published in numerous Canadian literary journals and her work has been widely anthologised as well as broadcast on radio and television. Marilyn Dumont (b. 1955) is a descendent of Gabriel Dumont's brother. She was born at Olds, Alberta, the daughter of Joseph Ambrose Dumont (1917–1992) and Cecile Marie Vanasse (1917–2000).

Her father, Ambrose Dumont was a great, great grandson of Isidore Dumont the first Metis killed at Duck Lake, Saskatchewan at the beginning of the Riel Resistance of 1885. Ambrose was, in-turn, a great, great nephew of Gabriel Dumont, brother to Isidore.

Marilyn's mother, Mary, is the daughter of Anna Dufresne and Daniel Vanasse (or Anasse). Daniel Anasse was born on July 19, 1885 at Calgary, the son of Jean Baptiste Vanasse and Emelie Calder. Mary's grandfather was Francois Dufresne, born January 1850 at Fort Pitt. He married Catherine Piche dit Morin.



Mary Dumont assisted organizing Treaty Days at Onion Lake and she was a competitive Red River Jigger. Daniel Vanasse was the Indian Agent and Interpreter for the Federal Government at the Onion Lake Reserve, Saskatchewan. Daniel's mother, Emelie, died at Onion Lake on April 1, 1947 at 89 years of age. Francois Dufresne the father of Anna Dufresne was a Scout/Interpreter for General G. Middleton whom led the British against the Metis in 1885. Francois Dufresne was captured by Big Bears warriors (Wandering Spirit) and held for just over 2 months before escaping.

Marilyn completed her B.A. in 1991 and has a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of British Columbia (1998). She has been writer-in-residence at the universities of Alberta, Windsor, Toronto, and was at Grant MacEwan Community College in Edmonton while teaching English. She taught Creative Writing through Athabasca University, was the Edmonton

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Public Library's Writer in Residence for 2008, and is working on a documentary about her family's connection to Gabriel Dumont.

Marilyn writes in a variety of forms to explicate the emotions of living between two worlds. Marilyn Dumont has been published since 1985 in literary journals such as: *Blue Buffalo*, *CVII*, *A Room of One's Own*, *Newest Review* and four anthologies: *Writing the Circle* (NeWest Press 1990), *The Road Home* (Reidmore Books 1992), *The Colour of Resistance* (Sister Vision Press 1994), and *Miscegenation Blues* (Sister Vision Press 1994). She is best known for her book of poetry, *A Really Good Brown Girl*. (London, Ontario: Brick Books, 1996).

Her work has also been broadcast on radio and television. Her first collection, *A Really Good Brown Girl*, won the 1997 Gerald Lampert Memorial Award, presented by the League of Canadian Poets, for the best first collection of poetry by a Canadian writer. *Globe and Mail* reviewer Judith Fitzgerald has described Dumont as "a preternaturally gifted artist in possession of a world-class bag of poetic tricks." Her second book of poetry, *green girl dreams Mountains* (Oolichan, 1992) won the 2002 Stephan G. Stephansson Award for Poetry from the Writer's Guild of Alberta. Her third book of collected poems is *that tongued belonging* (Cape Croker Reserve: Kegeponce Press, 2007). This book received the McNally Robinson Aboriginal Book of the Year award in 2007.

Marilyn taught Creative Writing at Simon Fraser University and Kwantlen University-College in Vancouver and at the University of Alberta, Edmonton.. She has worked in video production and as an intern at the National Film Board. In 2000-2001 she occupied the Writer-in-Residence position at the University of Alberta. In 2006 she was mentor for the wired Writing Program – Banff Centre for the Arts.

Marilyn's brother, Bruce Dumont (b. 1944), is currently serving his third term as President of the Metis Nation-British Columbia



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