

# IN A BREEZE OF DATES AND OLIVES, 4000 YEARS BC

**LYN LIFSHIN**

*The first poet we know to have signed her name to what she wrote. She lived 2285-2250BCE, high priestess in the Sumerian city state of Ur. After her death, Enheduanna continued to be remembered as an important figure, perhaps even attained semi-divine status.*

in the shadow of a  
white glowing house,  
a young woman moves  
through reeds and barley.  
Her hair shimmers in  
the hot light like  
ripples on the Euphrates.  
In the distance, the  
soft sounds of a  
stringed instrument.  
Children singing to the  
Oud. She is Enheduanna,  
daughter of Sargon.  
Sun turns her copper breasts  
fire. How can she know  
this man who brought her  
berries in a clay dish

is not only the founder of  
one of the first empires  
in history, a reign that will  
last long after his  
daughter is no longer  
stunned by the majesty's  
terror and is wild  
to carve her heart's  
words, chisel stone with  
her fierce passion, a  
world grounded in  
desire for gods and  
goddesses but is her father?  
She feels braided to her life  
with irresistible power  
and ripeness. Birds no  
one now living can  
see dart through brambles  
but Enheduanna hardly  
sees them, already  
humming, burning  
lost in the rifts of love,  
carving her breath  
and heartbeat into a clay  
tablet with a small knife  
like a stylus that might  
as well be part of her  
body, seething and wild  
to become the first writer  
in recorded history to  
sign her name to  
what she wrote.