

[Amazon review of Phoenix \(Ploughshares Solos\) \(Kindle edition\) on October 22, 29, 2012](#)

Reading Phoenix, by Megan Mayhew Bergman is like looking at a wall hanging of an intricate tapestry so artfully woven together that you gasp with pleasure. Bergman powerfully controls the story line and the underlying craft of capturing it on paper so that you are held in her competent hands from the moment you begin to read until the last page. She can be both elegant and harsh in the same paragraph. As an illustration, here is how Phoenix begins: *"I remember most vividly the tea my mother used to dye her auburn hair, the soup of crushed marigolds, rose hips and paprika. It was crimson like the blood that drips from Pete and Willow's goats this morning, young wethers with slit throats strung up on a clothesline."* You flinch as you read this. What you realize later is that these two sentences act as a springboard linking Phoenix's (the narrator) past life with her present one.

Phoenix tries to remain a neutral bystander as her employers, an unhappily married couple who own the farm where she lives and works, argue about everything. Her job as a cheese maker becomes a practical and creative release for her; concrete skills and a way to build another life. But what she has isn't permanent and she thinks about that. She thinks about how she was raised and the details of that move in and out of her daily life.

This is a beautifully written story that you'll want to read again and again while you wait for the author to write her next one.

Word count: 262 words

Writing sample written by Kathy H Porter