



etruscan press

Trio: Planet Parable, Run: A Verse-History of Victoria Woodhull, and Endless Body

By Karen Donovan, Diane Raptosh, and Daneen Wardrop

A Study Guide

Synopsis

Trio is three books in one: *Planet Parable* by Karen Donovan, *Run: A Verse-History of Victoria Woodhull* by Diane Raptosh, and *Endless Body* by Daneen Wardrop, all previous Etruscan authors, who bring their own unique style and voice, which become harmonic once compiled into one collection. Each piece takes you on its own narrative journey through the making of the world, history, and the body.

Reasons to Include in the Classroom

Trio blends narrative, geology, mythology, and history into a luminous poetic display, all while utilizing experimental forms, voice, and language. These three collections of poetry are relevant to many areas of academia.

Author Bios

Karen Donovan is the author of *Aard-vark to Axolotl*, a collection of illustrated short prose published by Etruscan Press, and two collections of poetry, *Your Enzymes Are Calling the Ancients* (Persea Books) and *Fugitive Red* (University of Massachusetts Press). She works for a social enterprise accelerator in Providence.

Diane Raptosh's fourth book of poetry, *American Amnesiac* (Etruscan Press), was longlisted for the 2013 National Book Award and was a finalist for the Housatonic Book Award. The recipient of three fellowships in literature from the Idaho Commission on the Arts, she served as the Boise Poet Laureate (2013), as well as the Idaho Writer-in-Residence (2013-2016). In 2018 she won the Idaho Governor's Arts Award in Excellence.

Author Bios (cont'd)

Diane Raptosh (cont'd) A highly active ambassador for poetry, she has given poetry workshops everywhere from riverbanks to maximum security prisons. She teaches literature and creative writing and co-directs the program in Criminal Justice/Prison Studies at the College of Idaho. Her sixth book of poems, *Dear Z: The Zygote Epistles*, was published by Etruscan Press in 2020.

Daneen Wardrop has authored four books of poetry: *Silk Road*, *The Odds of Being*, *Cyclorama*, and *Life as It*, winner of the Independent Publisher Book Award. She has received the National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship and the Poetry Society of America Robert H. Winner Award. Her work has appeared in *The Iowa Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, and many other magazines. Her scholarly books include most recently *Emily Dickinson and the Labor of Clothing* and *Civil War Nurse Narratives, 1863-1870*.

Study Questions & Writing Prompts

Planet Parable

1. What is "marl," and how does this contribute to the reading of the poems in that section?
2. In the beginning of "I Hear The Many," how do the line breaks at "canyons" and "delivered" add more meaning to the second stanza?
3. In lines 31-32 of the poem "This Noon" it says, "How simply the poem/assembles itself when it wishes." How does the crafting of a poem relate to the actual events happening in the poem?

Planet Parable (cont'd)

4. In the last two lines of “Pay No Attention to the People in Charge,” what is the significance of the speaker not taking the offered ride? What are they trying to convey to the reader?
5. Read “I Think All of This Could Be Almost Like Breathing.” Line 9 says, “I still need to say this is this.” What does this mean?
6. In “Quite a Bit Much” what is the speaker wrestling with?
7. What are “Optics” and how does the content and form of the poem “This Is Why Advanced Optics Is Taken Pass/Fail” relate to the concept?
8. In “Universe Reverse,” who or what is the speaker, and what is the speaker considering by the end of the poem?
9. *Writing Prompt: Write a poem about a physical object or concept and use the form and structure of the poem to represent the essence of your object or concept.*

Run: A Verse-History of Victoria Woodhull

1. In “Anna Claffin: A Mother’s Tale,” the only word that is capitalized is the word “Nowhere.” What is the significance of this?
2. Reread “Victoria on Victoria.” In actual fact, Victoria Woodhull (born 1838) was named after Queen Victoria (1837-1901). Do a little internet research on Queen Victoria. What are some of the harmonies and ironies that characterize the lives of these two Victorias?
3. In the poem “Tennie on Papa Buck,” why does Tennie compare her father to Mephistopheles, and what does this say about her feelings toward him?
4. What is the relationship between Victoria and Tennie? Do you believe there is any tension between them? Why or why not? How does the poem “Victoria Takes a Role in the Play, The Corsican Brothers” shed more light on this?
5. What is the significance of the single clipped rose?
6. In “Odessa Unfolds the Secrets of Money, Heretofore Strictly a Male Preserve” and “Odessa Telegraphs Tennie the Occasional Ditty” what is Odessa’s role, and how does the poetic structure change to match her voice?

Run: A Verse-History of Victoria Woodhull (cont'd)

7. Demosthenes is mentioned many times. Who is he, and why does it make sense to use him as a character that speaks to Victoria?
8. *Writing Prompt: Write a poem in the voice of someone from history giving you advice about your life in the present. Use this style to create a poem with texture.*
9. The poem “Tennessee | | Victoria On Gold and Free Love” uses a form that splits the poem in half. What affect does this have on the reading of the poem?
10. In “Extracts from a Letter” Pauline Wright Davis says, “I believe that you will/ unmask the hypocrisy/of a class none others/ dare touch. God help/and save you.” What is the irony in this statement?
11. What does the “X Out” represent?
12. In the poem “Out and” what effect does it have to remove the time stamps and the brackets?

Endless Body

1. In the Poem “Gift,” what does it mean to say, “The box came without instructions.” What is the tension in this poem?
2. Who is Caedmon? How does the speaker relate to or view Caedmon?
3. What is a fact about him that gives depth to the image, “As if a hare could fool Caedmon into forgetting rhythm”? How does this make sense?
4. What is a caesura, and how can it be used to affect voice in a poem?
5. *Writing Prompt: In the section “Body’s Approach,” take all the underlined titles, and create your own poem using those words/phrases.*
6. Read the poem “Bekos.” How would you describe this phenomenon? Do you believe it is possible to acquire language without having heard anyone speak?
7. In “Bat / echo” how is the forward slash (/) used to add meaning to the poem?

Endless Body (cont'd)

8. In the section “Body’s otherwise,” the section subtitles are taken from Dickinson’s fascicle manuscripts, and include her characteristic plus marks. How does this affect the reading of the poem?

9. In line 3 of “+ It is’nt steady – tho’ – ” it states, “they’ve given up.” List all the images that evoke the sense of giving up in this poem.

10. What are specific examples that show us what the relationship between the mother and daughter are?

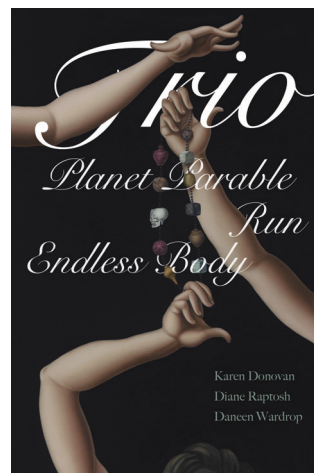
11. *Writing Prompt: Write a poem that expresses how you feel about a person, while not explicitly saying how you feel about them. Use the environment, actions and word choices to show this emotion.*

General

1. Who, or what, are the mediums, or outside sources of guidance in each of these books?
2. Find a poem by each author, written in a style that presents two differing voices or points of view in the same poem.
3. How do each of these poets merge the past with the present?
4. How might it be beneficial in poetry to bring voices from the past into the present?
5. Each poet takes you on a narrative arc. In your own words, describe what each poet’s narrative is.
6. In *Planet Parable*, and *Endless Body*, nature is brought up a lot. What is the role nature plays in both narratives?
7. Each poet speaks on not only the crafting of new worlds, political ideology, and bonds, but crafting of poetry itself. In what ways do these poets show their connection/disconnection with poetry as an artform?

Standards for the English Language Arts (compiled by NCTE and IRA)

1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
4. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
5. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.
6. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.
7. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.



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