

**Email Interview: Jenny Price**  
**Professor for the UCLA Center for the Study of Women**

*Melissa Bryan:* How were you impacted by Rachel Carson?

*Jenny Price:* I've been a keen environmentalist since I was a teenager in the early 1970s, but I didn't actually know much about Rachel Carson until I wrote about her much, much later. Carson's book *Silent Spring*, however, arguably is the foundational work for the brand of environmentalism that exploded in the 1960s and 70s--so her ultra-important work had an indirect impact on my thinking and passions.

*Melissa Bryan:* What made you want to reevaluate Carson's work?

*Jenny Price:* To be honest, in 2012, I was asked to give a talk to commemorate the 50th anniversary of *Silent Spring*--so I gave myself a crash course on Carson, and read everything she'd written and also a lot of the books that have been written *about* her. Carson is the patron saint of modern environmentalism--always praised to the skies and never critiqued. On one hand, her work was amazing and unbelievably important. On the other, the lack of any critiques seemed odd to me, as ideas and solutions that made sense 50 years ago never are exactly 100% applicable to present problems. I'm a huge fan of her expose of the chemical industry. I'm not a huge fan of her embrace of Nature as a pure refuge from a corrupt human society.

*Melissa Bryan:* Do you see the effects of her work in everyday life and society?

*Jenny Price:* Oh, absolutely. *Silent Spring* led directly to the EPA, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and on and on. Her efforts and wisdom and courage are in the air you breathe and the water you drink.

*Melissa Bryan:* What do you predict the U.S. would be like today if Rachel had not explored the harmful effects of DDT?

*Jenny Price:* Very possibly much, much more polluted. On the other hand, you never want to attribute massive change to any one single person-- that is, people at any particular time have to be *ready* for particular ideas and stories. In the early 60s, if Carson hadn't written this expose, other people likely would have done it--but possibly not with as much poetry and grace and persuasive power.