

Santa Fe Writers Project

20
sf WWP
YEARS



New Releases: 2021 – 2022

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A Note from Editor-in-Chief Andrew Gifford

Welcome to the SFWP community! We are a traditional publisher founded in 1998. Unlike many small presses, we don't focus on any particular genre. Our catalog ranges from fantasy epics to searing memoirs, from flash fiction to literary novels and short stories, from a collection of the 1980's fanzine *Pagan's Head* to cultural essays about the Chinese-American experience in the southern US. We don't believe that publishers have to be specialized or limited, and we enjoy embracing new trends and ideas beyond those of the current publishing industry.

We are author-centric in our approach. The author is the content creator, the voice we have chosen to invest in. Our authors don't pay anything, they get paid. They participate in every stage of the book's creation, and whether a book is brand new or 15 years old, we work to keep the title alive and successful.

Our books are distributed globally by the Independent Publishers Group, the original, and largest independent book sales and distribution company. We aggressively pursue subrights for our authors and have successfully sold over a dozen audio rights. Our titles have been translated into Chinese, Turkish, and Spanish.

SFWP continues to explore ways to champion books, writing, and writers. With over 60 titles in print, we've unflinchingly adapted to the ever-changing world of publishing and we challenge the norms by embracing short stories, novellas, translations, reprints, and the avant-garde.

Join us on our journey! Visit sfwp.com to learn more about our titles, our mission, and our authors. Follow us on Twitter @sfwp, and find us on Facebook and Instagram @santafewritersproject.

— Andrew Gifford

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Negative Space

Lilly Dancyger

ORDER NOW!

Lilly Dancyger's *Negative Space* is a reported and illustrated memoir following the imagery of her father's artwork to uncover the truth about his life, heroin addiction, and death, as well as her own story of grief and discovery.



Excerpt from *Negative Space*

They say all the cells in your body regenerate every seven years. When I turned twenty, my father had been dead for eight, so if that cell theory is true, no cell in my body had ever been on the planet at the same time as him. I'd changed literally, cell-by-cell, into a person he never knew.

I was in college, learning new things that I couldn't debate with him or get his opinion on, that I had to decide the value of for myself. I had an apartment in the East Village with a roommate who was like a sister to me.

I hung art on the walls—some of it my father's but some I'd discovered on my own. Even a few paintings and photographs that had been made after he was dead. I was bartending, part of my neighborhood community not as the daughter of a local artist, but as myself. I had a whole life, and my father wasn't in it. With every step forward, I was acutely aware that I was moving further and further from the version of me that had known him, or even a version of me that he would recognize.

I was entering the world as a fatherless woman after years as a fatherless girl, and I didn't know how to move forward without leaving my father behind. For all of my adolescence, I'd stayed rooted in my grief because that was where I'd felt most connected to him. It was where he had left me, like when I was little and my parents warned that if we ever got separated on the subway, I was to get out at the next stop and wait for them there. If I stayed in my grief, my father would know where to find me. But if I just went ahead and enjoyed college and started planning for a career and becoming my own full person in the world, leaving the heaviness of grief behind, I feared then that my father would be truly gone forever—somehow even more than he already was.

The only way to stop that from happening, I thought, was to find a new way to grieve for him. Whether I wanted to or not, I was outgrowing the grief I'd lived inside of for the last eight years, stretching and reaching toward a bigger life. The pieces no longer fit together, so I had to find a new shape for my grief that would fit inside my new life. I needed my relationship with my father to change and grow, like every parent-child relationship changes when the child becomes an adult—even if that just meant my relationship with his absence.

A Rumpus Book Club Pick!

A Refinery 29, Lithub, and Electric Lit most anticipated title of 2021!

“Candid, thrilling, wickedly smart, *Negative Space* is one of the greatest memoirs of this, or any, time.”

—T Kira Madden, award-winning author of
Long Live the Tribe of Fatherless Girls

“This striking memoir does what an outstanding memoir should: It not only encourages its readers to explore their pasts from new perspectives, but models the bravery needed to gaze behind the curtain of memory and face whatever realities you may find there.”

—Karla Strand, *Ms. Magazine*

“Much like her father had, Dancyger crafts a striking composition out of found objects, a poignant portrait of the identities we construct out of grief.”

—Oprah Daily

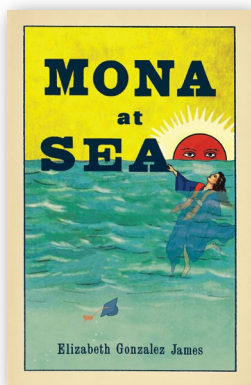
\$16.95 | Memoir | 292 pgs | 978-1-951631-03-1
Availability: Print, electronic, and audio worldwide
distributed by Independent Publishers Group

Mona at Sea

Elizabeth Gonzalez James

ORDER NOW!

A darkly funny coming-of-age tale set against the backdrop of the Great Recession that takes the audience on a wild journey through a strange, uncertain modern America.



Excerpt from *Mona at Sea*

The first thing I see every morning is my trophy wall. Opposite my bed, from about two feet off the floor and stretching up to the ceiling, is every major award I have received since the first grade. Some notable highlights include Outstanding Delegate in Model UN, first place in the Junior MBA Club's Emerging Entrepreneurs Expo, Blue Ribbon in the Arizona State Science Fair four years in a row, Best Oil Painting in the Southwest Young Artists Showcase, and my personal favorite: Fourth place in the National Spelling Bee, just three spots shy of the big prize. In one sweep across the twelve by ten-foot space I can relive my entire childhood.

I blink, my brain dull from bad dreams. It's been the same one for months, one that frightens me for reasons I can't articulate. It's an encroaching presence, a texture more than anything else, like tightly woven, porous, dark grey mesh. The entire dream is that I sit in some formless, abstract place and watch as the texture moves closer. And whatever's contained in the dark grey, whatever it is or represents, I don't want to find out what happens when it reaches me.

Getting out of bed after a tequila night is always a frightening proposition. You never really know if you have a hangover until you stand up. Sometimes I lie there for fifteen minutes, stock still, trying to suss out what hurts. Today I hold my breath and decide to do it quickly. Rip off the covers and put my feet on the ground and outrun the headache, the sour stomach, get some coffee into me before I survey the damage.

I'm dizzy. That's bad. My head doesn't hurt, though. That's good. I drape my comforter over myself like a shroud and pad to the kitchen in my socks, hoping I've missed my parents. I peer around the corner and eye the coffee maker. No one.

I'm working on an itch inside my armpit and I have a cold tortilla hanging out of my mouth when my mother appears in the doorway like Jacob Marley come to bring ill tidings.

"Good morning," she says, though she's already moved past the greeting to look around at the counters, making sure I haven't left crumbs or upset the stacks of paper and journals she's left at neat intervals. She takes off her glasses and rubs the bridge of her nose. Her close-cropped brown hair gleams even in the grey morning light. It's new since Christmas, and the only option left after she spent 2008 as a blonde, then a redhead, and then for a few months, some bang-heavy layered thing that made her look like Pete Wentz.

"Hmhmm." I point to the food in my mouth.

"What's on your schedule today?" she asks.

I shrug. *Price is Right* at ten, *Dr. Phil* at eleven, long shower, cocktails, *Oprah*, staring wistfully out the window, the evening news, some self-loathing before dinner, obligatory family interaction, a few more cocktails, and then cat videos until I fall asleep with my face mashed against the keyboard.

I take the tortilla out of my mouth. "Same thing I do every day. Applying for jobs."

A Rumpus Book Club Pick

**Selected as a most anticipated title of 2021
by The Millions!**

"*Mona at Sea* reads like an intimate late night conversation with the friend you never knew you needed. Written with humor and insight and vulnerability, it's a tribute to the struggle to stay upright as the world around you comes falling down."

— Mat Johnson, author of *Pym* and *Hunting in Harlem*

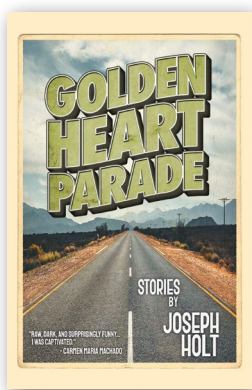
\$15.95 | Fiction | 270 pgs | 978-1-951631-01-7
Availability: Print, electronic, and audio worldwide
distributed by Independent Publishers Group

Golden Heart Parade

Joseph Holt

ORDER NOW!

Professor and radio personality **Joseph Holt's** *Golden Heart Parade* is a collection of stories that examine the complex, conflicted psyche of the American Midwesterner, following characters who are often out of work, down on their luck, and seeking redemption anywhere they can find it, often through the most farfetched and illogical means.



Excerpt from “Worst at Night”

Someone coughs from inside my bedroom. Sandy drops her magazine. “Who is that?” she whispers, sliding up the couch. “Who’s here?” Her breath is quick and shallow, like she’d been doused with ice water. I raise a finger to my lips to quiet her. My bedroom is dark, and we can’t see anything. Then something squeaks—a floorboard or bedspring, or a whimpering animal.

I hustle Sandy into the kitchen and guide her onto a stool. “Sit still,” I say. “Breathe, Sandy.” Under the sink I find a dust broom and a half-empty paint can, useless weapons. “Hey—” I whisper, snapping my fingers. “Don’t move.” I go into the utility closet and grab an old metal softball bat.

In my living room I scan the spaces behind the furniture, look for bulges in the dusty curtains. I take a wide berth until I see my mattress and dresser, my nightstand, moonlight on the trees through the window. I reach around the doorframe and click the bedroom light.

On the floor against the far wall is a fat man lying facedown. He is very fat. He wears canvas jeans and a short leather jacket from which his stomach pools out like he’d been poured there. His hands rest at his waist, swollen as mitts. Even his neck is fat, folding over itself as if looped by wires.

“Get up,” I say.

“I’m drunk,” says the man.

I prod his kidney with the bat. He squirms in the smallest way, as if burrowing into the floor. “Get up and walk out. My daughter’s here.”

"I'm drunk," he murmurs. "Untie my boots."

The man's hair is long and thin, draped over his face. He's no one I know. I've never seen anyone so fat. "Who are you?"

"Untie my boots."

I nudge him with my foot trying to turn him over. "Please don't," he says. "I'm lost." The treads of his boots are caked with mud and straw. He's a pathetic man, sorry and helpless, so I lay down the bat, lift one leg at the ankle, and begin with his boots.

"You stepped in shit," I say. The man fidgets and I lose hold of his laces. Swiftly, with the force of an angry mare, he stomps my chest and pitches me backward. My head strikes the wall, and everything flashes white. The man's hands and knees scabble the floor, and all at once he launches a shoulder at me, but I dodge him, and he folds into the wall with a grunt.

I pounce and punch him in the ribs, but it's like pummeling a sack of flour. He bucks me off, smothers me, pins my face with his forearm. I grapple for the bat, anything, but my hand only sweeps the dusty floor. The man groans and soughs and his hair brushes my face, and then I hear—I feel, like a firecracker—a solid thud, and the man's weight lifts off me.

I prop myself against the wall, blinking everything into focus. Sandy stands over me dappled with olive paint, the dented can swinging from her fist. Against the other wall is the fat man, his jacket bunched around his shoulders. He lies motionless, having burst the closet doors from their hinges and collapsed them to splinters.

"I loved this collection—it's raw, dark, and surprisingly funny, reminiscent of Nathan Ballingrud or Alissa Nutting. There's so much precision and verve in these stories; I was captivated the entire way through."

— Carmen Maria Machado

\$15.95 | Short Stories | 178 pgs | 978-1-951631-07-9

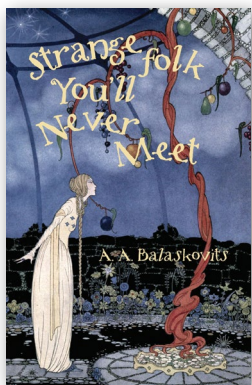
Availability: Print and electronic, worldwide
distributed by Independent Publishers Group

Strange Folk You'll Never Meet

A.A. Balaskovits

ORDER NOW!

From the author of *Magic For Unlucky Girls*, **A.A. Balaskovits**, *Strange Folk You'll Never Meet* is a collection of magical stories with a fabulist feminist edge. Perfect for fans of fractured fairy tales.



Excerpt from “Strange Folk”

After dropping off Artie at the store with a wad of singles and fives, she drove to city hall, and the skull. She wasn't sure where you deposited unwanted, lost children, but she suspected the people who collected taxes would have some idea.

It was impossible to avoid the skull, not in a place that collected little agonies. There were smaller displays littered in the center of town hall, some perhaps real, and others very clearly made up from bored, sick minds. Discovering that woman in the tree gave them the right to collect and display all manner of local atrocities, like they were immune to horror now, and could collect a few more pieces. To the left, a pile of poorly woven cloth from a girl who once lost a weaving contest, which is one of the worst things you can do, if you are a girl. Lose. She hung herself, in her grief, because no one ever let her forget that one time she had not won, that time her fingers slipped the loop, that time she meant to use black thread but instead had brought so much white. She died doing what she loved, tying strings together around her neck, and knotting them to the rafters above her bed. All those people who made her feel small? They felt bad, too, in that way that grief curls into your throat tight enough to make you choke on it if you inhale too fast. So they undid her last knot and put her body in the ground to nourish the spiders, all those spinning small things. Perhaps they hoped the creatures would spin her out anew, make of her flesh into silk, so they wouldn't feel so bad anymore.

There was a helpful little sign under the display: *Remember to be happy.*

To the right, a lump of what was more than likely coal dusted with green and brown paint but was said to have come from the local reservoir—the fossilized

remains of a monster, under consideration for study from the local university's anthropology department.

Above them hung a wooden flute that was said to produce the most beautiful music in the world, but only people who had died could hear it, so it was floating above them, like a reminder that there was beautiful music in heaven. You'd hear it eventually, if you were good enough.

There, a shrunken head, and over there, golden coins that almost certainly did not have chocolate inside. Different administrations put more effort into the collection than others.

But the main attraction was the first.

Praise for A.A. Balaskovits

"...wonderful, truly original."

— Emily St. John Mandel, author of *Station Eleven*

"This accomplished collection interlocks the horrific and the wondrous through deliciously dry humor, resulting in a unique must-read for fans of Angela Carter, Maria Dahvana Headley, and A.S. Byatt."

— *Publishers Weekly*

"Not your great-grandmother's fireside tales, these stories are slyly comedic one moment, viscerally horrifying the next, and evermore gorgeously eerie"

— Lenore Hart, series editor,
The Night Bazaar and *The Night Bazaar Venice*

"Haunted by terrifying, strange children; gruesome moments of devouring dirt and blood; mothers grasping at straws and women seeking revenge...the gems in this collection make it worth a look for adult fantasy readers who enjoy fairy tale retellings that have a sprinkling of horror mixed in."

— *Booklist*

\$14.95 | Fantasy/Fairy Tales | 160 pgs | 978-1-951631-13-0

Availability: Print and electronic, worldwide

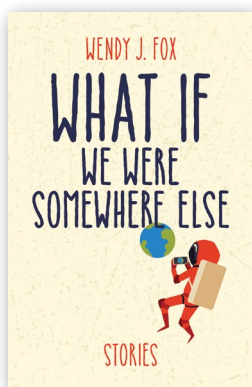
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What If We Were Somewhere Else

Wendy J. Fox

ORDER NOW!

From the author of *If The Ice Had Held*, *The Seven Stages of Anger & Other Stories*, and *The Pull Of It*, **Wendy J. Fox's** *What If We Were Somewhere Else* is a tragicomic new collection of linked short stories that follows the turbulent lives of office workers, from strip clubs to booze cruises, through failing marriages and poor management, and even on a journey to the moon.



Excerpt from “Tornado Watch”

In our home there were sounds. One of the sounds was like a balloon slowly deflating, a sound of almost nothing, of air being displaced, and I am not sure if we knew it was the canary in the coal mine of our marriage, which we were not paying very much attention to. So, we did not worry about it in particular, we only complained about the unplaceable noise. We checked the fridge and all of the other major appliances, we checked the HVAC system, we poked around outside the house and found nothing, but we kept hearing the slow, gentle whooshing punctuated occasionally by a squeak. Or the call of a suffocating bird.

We are paying the mortgage, and so I think we have some right to get whatever this is fixed, Jimmy, my husband, and I said to one another. We fiddled with the thermostat and took a flashlight to the crawlspace, and we called our insurance company, who kept wanting to know if we were opening a claim and we kept saying that we weren't sure, we weren't sure what was wrong—we were just trying to understand if we were covered.

We didn't know why it was so complicated.

We were married to one another, and we were also married to work, and we were married to our ideas, our ridiculous ideas—so caught up in the way laundry was folded or aspirational grocery lists. Most nights the produce rotted as we hit the booze. If we were drunk enough, we didn't hear anything, until finally that balloon must have released the final wheeze all at once, sputtering around like a firecracker through our house.

COULD YOU PLEASE, I'd written with Sharpie on a bright-lime sticky on a Tuesday before I left for work—the last day Jimmy slept in our bed—*CALL A PLUMBER BECAUSE IT MIGHT BE THE PLUMBING?* I didn't know it was the last day then. I didn't know until I came home and his own note was pasted on the countertop.

went to my moms

It wasn't like him to leave a note. Usually he texted.

We had met, Jimmy and I, just over a decade ago. We were both working in an office, and he was a contract employee, and when his contract ended, he asked me out. It was surprising. We had barely spoken; he was on a different team. We went on two dates, and the balloon filled up so quickly I thought it would pop. It was like a sharp intake of helium sucking the oxygen out of our bodies, like we already loved one another so much we couldn't breathe and we were only gasping hearts and guts. We were giddy and high and operating on an upper frequency.

We married on our fifth date—we made an impulsive drive to Blackhawk, Colorado, a casino town in the upper foothills of the Rockies. We both wore jeans, which was what we'd been wearing when we decided to get in Jimmy's car and go. Afterward, we rented a room at a hotel and then lay on the bed naked and wondered just exactly what we'd done.

We decided to sell our respective townhouses and get a place together. We decided we'd really make a go of it. We knew we were being reckless, but we didn't care. The first year of our marriage was in fact highly administrative, working backward through everything we hadn't done, like announcing our nuptials and getting to know one another in the day-to-day.

A Rumpus Book Club pick!

"Fox delivers a realistic, emotionally driven set of interlinked stories... Relatable, affecting, and at times absurd, this collection is for anyone who has felt frustrated at work. It shows us that there is more to life than what we do for a living."

—*Booklist*, **Starred Review**

\$15.95 | Short Stories | 192 pgs | 978-1-951631-05-5

Availability: Print and electronic, worldwide

distributed by Independent Publishers Group

I'm Not Hungry But I Could Eat

Christopher Gonzalez

ORDER NOW!

From the co-fiction editor of *Barrelhouse Magazine* **Christopher Gonzalez**, *I'm Not Hungry But I Could Eat* is a compact short story collection about messy and hunger-fueled bisexual Puerto Rican men who strive to satisfy their cravings of the stomach, heart, and soul in a conflicted and unpredictable world.



Excerpt from “Enough for Two to Share”

He starts with his name, which you don't quite catch, later entering it into your phone under a single M. He says he works for an upscale restaurant an avenue over, handles their inventory, makes enough so he and his girl—so there is a girl—can hold onto the junior one-bedroom in Washington Heights. Says he's Puerto Rican, like yourself. He slaps you on the arm when he says it and you're all too eager to confirm the accusation. He hovers around you like burning incense. He speaks and the gentle smoke of his cologne comforts you.

The first round of drinks is a shot of Jäger with a Blue Moon to chase. So is the second, and third. The black licorice taste is an affront to your tongue, but burying disgust is a muscle you know how to flex. He dunks his chicken fingers good in honey mustard, crams four or five in his mouth at a time, chewing wildly. You hold back, swallow one before daring to grab another.

* * *

When you meet M, you've been in therapy for about three months. Got yourself a straight, affluent, white male therapist, which is hilarious because, against your better judgement, this means you spend each session seeking his approval. You hate that you've been conditioned to react in any way to the firm voice of a white man. You don't crawl towards him like a dog—you crave the pressure of his foot on your chest, wonder if he could stomp straight through to your heart, if he'd draw circles in your blood with his toes. He only ever wants to talk about your father, the gash created by his absence, so he can properly interrogate your everyday pain.

You'd rather talk about love now, companionship now. There's a cockiness to the way he speaks to you: he withholds eye contact, reclines in his chair, both hands cradling the back of his head. What might you say to him about M? How, after two hours of drinking yourself dizzy and listening to him talk about the fights he's gotten into—over women, for women, with women, to spite women—you stay, order another round of drinks, charge it to your aching credit card. How you don't flinch when he says his girl hangs around with too many fags, or when he says no homo after grazing his knuckles across your knee. After the fifth round, you feel intoxicated by the pure liquor of his trust. You double over laughing and throw your arms around him for a hug, just a hug between dudes, friend shit, nothing gay about it, nothing at all, and make a temporary home from your cheek pressed into his neck.

A Rumpus Book Club pick!

"These sharp stories, sometimes hilarious and sometimes wrenching, form a collaged portrait of longing and uncertainty...this is a compelling debut."

— Danny Caine, author of *Continental Breakfast* and *El Dorado Freddy's*, owner of the Raven Book Store

"Gonzalez's debut collection crackles with humor and tension in brilliantly crafted stories about food and relationships. Throughout, Gonzalez works multiple registers, creating rich, compressed portraits of his characters. This is as poignant as it is hilarious."

— *Publishers Weekly*, **Starred Review**

"At times full of devastating portraits of bisexual Puerto Rican life, and at others full of the punchiest wit and charm, Gonzalez's writing leaves you insatiable...craving to need more and more from this exciting writer."

— Marcos Gonzalez author of *Pedro's Theory: Reimagining the Promised Land*

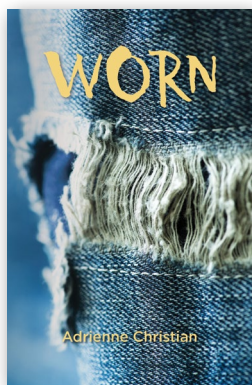
\$14.95 | Short Stories | 122 pgs | 978-1-951631-21-5
Availability: Print, electronic, and audio worldwide
distributed by Independent Publishers Group

Worn

Adrienne Christian

ORDER NOW!

Worn, a new poetry collection by **Adrienne Christian** (award-winning author of *12023 Woodmont Ave* and *A Proper Lover*) addresses Black love and belonging, as expressed through clothing, combining grief, fear, and desire to navigate love, life, and loss from an African American perspective.



Excerpt from *Worn*

The Ad Agency Workers

No one wants to be here
 In boxed-in solitude.
 We won't make art, we fear —
 creative flow subdued.

In boxed-in solitude,
 we wait here for our tasks.
 Creative flow subdued,
 we do just what Boss asks.

We wait here for our tasks —
 the same ones as last year.
 We do just what Boss asks;
 why even keep us here?

The same year after year —
 because this model worked.
 To it we must adhere
 in khakis and blue shirts.

\$14.95 | Poetry | 82 pgs | 978-1-951631-09-3
 Availability: Print and electronic, worldwide
 distributed by Independent Publishers Group

A Rumpus
 Poetry Book Club pick!



The Santa Fe Writers Project Quarterly publishes four times a year with year-round submissions!

Send us:

- Fiction (literary, sci-fi, slipstream, auto, flash, realistic, magical realism, etc.)
- Creative nonfiction (memoir, personal essay, literary journalism, braided, etc.)
- Book reviews (of all books from all genres published in the last five years, preferably by small or indie presses)

Guidelines:

- 2,000 - 3,000 words is standard, but if it's longer or shorter, send it anyway!
- Use our Submittable submission manager. No emailed entries will be accepted.
- Contributors retain all rights to their work.
- We accept previously published work as long as you have the rights to the work.

Submit today!

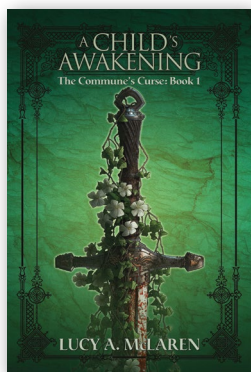
<https://santafewritersproject.submittable.com/submit>

A Child's Awakening

Lucy A. McLaren

ORDER NOW!

In a kingdom oppressed by a ruthless cult, a young woman fights her past trauma to protect two children being hunted relentlessly by the cult's soldiers. They must survive a harrowing journey to the uncertain safety promised by rebel leaders in this debut young adult fantasy that launches an exciting new trilogy.



Excerpt from *A Child's Awakening*

He was swept up in the moment before he could stop himself. His heart thrummed; his powers couldn't be as evil as his father predicted. This dog could be his, body and mind. He could control her every movement and action if he wished. In turn, she would be by his side. He could confide in her, converse as people do—she would know his every thought. He would never be alone again.

She could abandon me too, just like everyone else.

The moment the thought entered his mind, the dog yelped and slumped to the floor. The boy frowned and loosened his grasp. He knelt to examine her, saw the shallowness of her strained breaths, felt her mind retreat from his.

She's dying. He held up his palm. *Did I do this?* It had been outside his conscious mind. There was no sadness around the realisation; simply an understanding that it was true.

She'd got too close, been overwhelmed. Though he knew he'd allowed her to, he couldn't stop the flood of hatred that poured forth then. *How dare she?* He pressed his hand down on her back, allowing his powers to take hold once more. "You can't leave me," he whispered harshly, shaking her delicate body. At the edges of his awareness, he knew his face was contorted with an unspoken fury, cracked lips pulled tight across his teeth, eyes burning into the collapsed dog, caring nothing for her growing weakness. He imagined he looked like his father.

See how worthy I am now. See my power.

"Stop." The Grand Magister's voice shattered his concentration. He blinked as he focused once more on the room around him, powers instantly receding.

Yet he couldn't forget the feeling of control that had flowed through him. To have the life of another within his grasp, it was...intoxicating. He spared a final look at the dog. She twitched as the last tendrils of her life drifted away, and then was still.

Worthless mutt.

Turning towards the Grand Magister, he sensed a ripple of approval at his display.

And so he began to understand.

To understand why he was here. Why his family had betrayed him, leaving him to be treated as nothing more than a peasant despite the noble blood that flowed through his veins.

The Grand Magister nodded, bringing his hands together in a single, silent clap, and the boy knew: this was only the beginning of his training

"I was struck by McLaren's exquisite prose [and] the fast pace of her story...[*A Child's Awakening*] completely captivated me from the start: move this book to the top of your TBR pile, it's an absolute stunner!"

—Cindy van Wilder, author of *The Trespassers* series

"Tight and fascinating world-building that will delight fantasy fans, coupled with clear-eyed portraits of trauma in its characters that raise it above the usual standard."

—Daniel M. Ford, best-selling author of *The Paladin* and *The Warden* fantasy series

\$16.95 | Young Adult Fantasy | 380 pgs | 978-1-951631-17-8

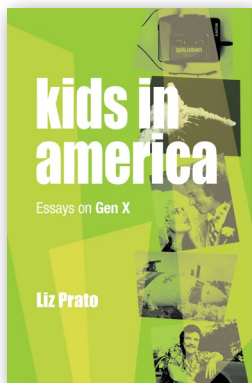
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Kids in America: Essays on Gen X

ORDER NOW!

Liz Prato

A linked essay collection from best-selling author **Liz Prato** that examines issues of privilege, racial inequality, rape culture, mental illness, pop culture, and loss in the smallest generation in modern history.



Excerpt from *Kids in America: Essays on Gen X*

We were born while young men dying in faraway jungles and young people dying in nearby demonstrations and our president betraying democracy were shown nightly on TV. We were born into the hope of the moon landing, and into the despair of the murders of Dr. King and Bobby Kennedy. We bounced around in the backs of station wagons without seatbelts, and rode bikes without helmets. We had telephones before answering machines, and TVs before VCRs, and Dewey decimal before Wikipedia. We watched a lot of

TV. We heard new music from the radio and our older siblings and record stores where we flipped through bins and held vinyl in our hands. We watched Prince and George Michael and Michael Jackson and Joe Strummer the first time their videos were on MTV.

We celebrated the patriotism of America's bicentennial and we watched as Kunta Kinte was kidnapped and beaten and maimed by Ben Cartwright and Lou Grant and Mr. Brady. We stood in line to watch Star Wars, and then The Empire Strikes Back, and stood in line to watch them again. We spent 444 days praying fifty-two Americans would be safely released from captivity in Iran. We watched the attempted assassination of Ronald Reagan and the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II and the successful assassination of John Lennon. We cheered the U.S. men's Olympic hockey team to win the Miracle on Ice against the USSR, underscoring that the Cold War was very much alive.

We were called latchkey cynical lazy sarcastic flighty disaffected alienated easily-distracted late blooming self-involved aimless apathetic skeptical pessimistic self-

medicating impatient angry uncommitted won't-grow-up purposeless unreliable slackers.

We are the first generation in modern history to make less money than our parents.

We are the last generation to live without fear of being gunned down in school. We are the last generation raised without awareness of neurocognitive disorders and mental illness in kids. We are not the last generation to look the other way—or be oblivious—when those among us sexually assault those among us at parties, but we suspect—we hope—we are the last generation that figured it seemed okay for male teachers to have sex with the girls. We are the first generation to lose our virginity when sex was linked to a deadly disease, one that our president long refused to name, much less give a shit about.

It's said we're the last generation raised without the threat of terrorism, but we lost people we loved to terrorism before 9/11, before Oklahoma City. We lost ourselves to freak accidents and addiction and mental illness and suicide and rare cancers and white supremacy. We ended up in rehab and cults and homeless shelters and bankruptcy and morgues.

We are Gen X.

"A dazzling exploration into how cultures and identities criss-cross each other, Liz Prato's *Kids in America* traces how Gen X emerged from the fire and fury of a nation falling to pieces. Phenomenal!"

—Lidia Yuknavitch, author of *Verge-Stories* and *The Book of Joan*

"*Kids in America* is a kick-ass collection. Part memoir, part documentary, these probing and intimate essays take us through the grief, the freedom, the risk-taking, and the pain that shaped Generation X. Vivid and absorbing."

—Dinty W. Moore, author of *Between Panic & Desire*

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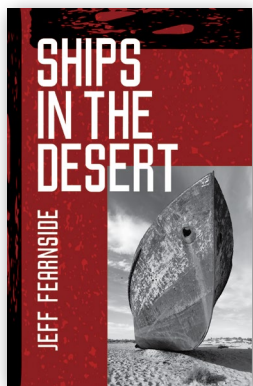
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Ships in the Desert

Jeff Fearnside

ORDER NOW!

From **Jeff Fearnside**, award-winning author of *Making Love While Levitating Three Feet in the Air*, this collection of linked personal essays explores life lessons learned during four years of living and working as an educator in Central Asia, primarily in Kazakhstan, with an emphasis on place, culture, and the natural environment, examining environmental crises, controversial practices by Western missionaries, water rights, and the overall cultural and social changes in the region.



Excerpt from *Ships in the Desert*

I've seen many strange things in my travels through Asia: the Karni Mata Temple in northern India, a holy place packed with thousands of holy rats that scurry up, down, around, and over everything, including visitors' shoes; the Flintstones-like cave cities in Cappadocia, Turkey, carved out of volcanic rock, still inhabited today; the sarcophagus of the Old Testament Prophet Daniel in Uzbekistan, a velvet-draped slab of marble eighteen meters long, for legend says that his body continues to grow. But the sight I saw as the road now opened up in

front of us on the Aral's former seabed was the strangest of them all.

There they were, a fleet of ships in the desert.

There were about a dozen in all, rudders jammed into the dry mud, anchors lowered—a redundant gesture. Two large ships, about two hundred feet long and a thousand tons each, stood side by side so close that it was easy to imagine sailors scurrying about to transfer fish or fuel, supplies or crew. The smallest of the group was about one hundred feet long and one hundred tons. It stood alone, an orphan. The others were pointed in every direction as if heedless of their neighbors, a massive traffic jam in the making that was stopped by the receding waters.

"It's a shame these ships were wasted," I said in English. A few minutes later, Agytai said nearly the same thing in Russian.

He explained that as the sea retreated, the fishermen kept moving their fleet to keep it from becoming grounded. Eventually it ended up here, the deepest part. But this became cut off, and the fishermen could do nothing as their ships

rode the waters gently to the bottom and then rode the mud that was left until there was no water at all, only baked earth. Through it all, the ships remained completely upright. From a distance, a mirage shimmering above the sand, they still appeared to be at sea.

“How long have they been here?” I asked Agytai.

“For a long time.”

“Exactly how long?”

“A long time,” he repeated. He squinted into the past and estimated it had been about thirty years, or since the early 1970s.

We parked the UAZ and walked right up to the beached relics. It was easy enough to climb on board many of them; one featured an open hatch right at ground level, though for most we had to pull ourselves over the gunwales and onto the decks. Anything useful—radios, radar, sounding devices—had been stripped long ago. Even much of the metal had been salvaged as scrap. The rest was left to rust and remember better times.

I plunged down into engine rooms that no longer smelled of diesel but of decay, scurried up ladders on masts where I scouted not schools of fish but rather vistas of desolation. Rusting gangways gave way, imitating the roll and pitch of the sea.

“In rich, searching essays...[Fearnside] shows us that we have much to learn from the realities of a country most Americans can't find on a map, revealing how we are connected, and all responsible for living with integrity.”

—Michael Copperman, author of *Teacher: Two Years in the Mississippi Delta*

“Fearnside explores environmental degradation and religious tensions, the powerful influence of a Soviet past on the present, and what it means to be a teacher in a foreign land. There is much in this book to be admired.”

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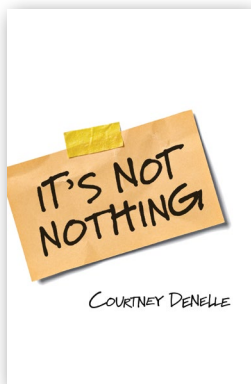
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It's Not Nothing

Courtney Denelle

ORDER NOW!

A young woman is compelled to survive when her traumatic past explodes into her present, just as she begins to transition from being homeless to adjusting back into the world that pushed her out.



Excerpt from *It's Not Nothing*

I am okay, but I am not well. Left to my own devices, a ringing doorbell might be the end me, might be the very thing that does me in.

There—an unannounced visitor did the job you could never manage!

That's me, speaking to myself. Speaking to my fucking scars. The ones you can see, the ones you can't.

All in all, there are two rules in the Program: Don't drink, and go to meetings. The simplicity is appealing. That, and how the Program loves an aphorism. The best one is, You're only as sick as your secrets.

I continue going to meetings but there are no answers for me in those seated circles. I don't even keep track of the time that has passed. It's been how long, without a hangover? No use celebrating, no need to pat me on the back. It is not virtuous to not do the thing I do not want to do.

What keeps one foot in front of the other is selective remembering. Selective forgetting. Like how I don't go to the library anymore because it is brimming with all that has passed.

The bathroom where I had washed up, where I took a breather or took a nap. The green reading room with the green reading lamps. The fiction stacks, all my friends lined up in a row. I might smell the familiar smells, I might see the familiar sights. Yet something essential has changed. Like I've lost myself and gained empty space for the losing.

So—I am gathering cracked spines, underlined passages, and dog-eared pages. I am buying up used books, as many as I can. As if I could live inside them.

I will stack the odds in my favor. I will stack them all around me. My bookcase deities.

I will buy a bookcase, cheap.

I bolt my door at night, every night. The irony of it. Me, making nice with notions of safety and control. Me, who lived so long with the steady urge of a mind that wanted me dead.

Here's the movie I want to see. A killer breaks into the home of a broken, fatal-minded woman and is greeted as a conquering hero.

Finally, she says, and puts on some Elliot Smith.

I look into my face reflecting. I say, You're fine, everything's fine. It was a rough patch, is all. But a phantom paces behind my irises.

Get me out of here, I whine, and what I am talking about is my body.

These little red pills coax me on. Better than coffee and diet soda and energy drinks combined, plus my sinuses are wrung dry. But I've been cut off at the pharmacy. I have to wait until next month. I really flipped out on the pharmacists. Went full-tilt riled-up dirt bag, and proved their point in doing so—they're right to keep the cold medicine behind the counter now.

"This is an extraordinary debut from a wildly talented author. Denelle's prose is a marvel of precision. Flashes of unexpected humor light up the darkness, and the arc of her novel is deeply moving."

— Emily St. John Mandel, author of *Station Eleven* and *Sea of Tranquility*

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