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Interior With Sudden Joy: Poems



Synopsis

The Next Illogical Step In Love Poetry
The next illogical step in love poetry
The most inscrutable beautiful names in this world
always do sound like diseases.
It is because they are engorged. G., I am a fool.
What we feel in the solar plexus wrecks us.
Halfway squatting on a crate where feeling happened. Caresses."
--from "Dear Gonglya,"
At once hyper-contemporary and archaic, erotic, indecorous, and extravagant like nobody else, Brenda Shaughnessy seeks outrageous avenues of access to the heart, "This strumpet muscle under your breast describing / you minutely, Volupt, volupt."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Brenda Shaughnessy's art is urgent and exuberant, deeply witty and just as disturbing. In her love poems the threat of failure goes both ways, and amnesia is never in the offing. The dizzying verses in *Interior with Sudden Joy* veer between adoration and the inevitable, since "espionage of flesh roots in the dirt / of the heart." One is titled "You're Not Home, It's Probably Better," which is either hilarious or heartbreaking, depending on your mood. Another begins, "Let this one clear square of thought be just / like a room you could come in to." Beautiful, no? In Shaughnessy's visceral wonderland, obsession and poison go hand in hand, mirrors make people vanish, and nuns are definitely not safe in their alabaster chambers. She's ever intent on rescuing (or wresting) us from our easy beliefs. "The Question and Its Mark" is her stunning take on the myth of Leda and the Swan, its final couplet reading: "Leda possessed a pair of knees that also bent / in prayer. I ask of you only what she asked for there." Yes, this poet knows her tropes, and has a sure synesthetic

touch. Her pairs of women are "hot with mixed / light drunk with insult," and her private language--in which words such as blue, strumpet, and silver reverberate--soon becomes a kind of lingua franca between her and the reader. In her debut, Shaughnessy's debt to the surrealists, particularly to Dorothea Tanning, is visible and audible on each page. She's also a distant and distancing poetic relative of Sylvia Plath, wielding a similar jaunty threat. "Epithalament," her twist of an epithalamium, invokes a woman lost--and begins: "Other weddings are so shrewd on the sofa, short / and baffled, basset-legged." What better combination could there be of tradition, the individual talent, and the razor-sharp imagination? --Kerry Fried --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Another remarkable debut, Shaughnessy's collection is summed up neatly by its title. She's focused, certainly, writing packed, demanding "interior" verse that she nevertheless hospitably invites you to enter: "Let this one clear square of thought be just/ like a room you could come in to." But throughout, the poems are sunlit with her boundless energy, with her passion, determination, and, yes, joy, which simply radiates off the page. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

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