



Come the Tide

Sam Reese

Platypus Press (Jun 8, 2019)

Softcover \$16.00 (192pp)

978-1-913007-00-3

Nimble and effusive, the tales of Sam Reese's *Come the Tide* are an aesthete's paradise, moving from haunting snapshots toward often amorphous conclusions. There are bronzed commas of bodies, vines climbing walls like elaborate tattoos, and shadows that wrap around people like waves. Alluring metaphors test known locutions, as when a thaw carries the sound of a crackle, then a purr.

In "Tasting Notes," a translator on Australian shores mulls over the impressions that her barista lover leaves on her palate, ultimately concluding that perhaps he's not for her. In "Overgrown," two characters share a home that clings to a cliffside, drawing fauna and other life out of sketches and dreams. In "Atlantis," a mourning, searching woman pushes through the detritus of her heartbreak to center herself in someone else's past. Characters wrangle with doubts and fears that range from ordinary to apocalyptic, always seeking higher ground.

Reese's stories hold attention in their determination to concentrate on momentary impressions, even at the expense of arriving somewhere definitive. Lines find beauty in blastomas and peace in the science of diseases. Supple phrases awaken cravings with their evocations—for tastes of dandelion and honey, rich jasmine, and jelly affogatos, yes, but also for the scuttle of fingers across ocean-salted skin.

What isn't said sparks curiosity, too, taking on its own weight; some unnamed leads whose genders are obscured make it possible to graft different kinds of meanings on to the same tales. Hints of dark events arise here and there—of a murder, of infidelity, of natural disasters—but their particulars are shunted aside in favor of eerie, lingering images, like one of shivering miniature maple leaves.

Come the Tide is an alternately ponderous and fleet collection of stories that are breathed to life thanks to their weird and familiar images.

MICHELLE ANNE SCHINGLER (May/June 2019)

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