



Give a Girl Chaos

Heidi Seaborn

Mastodon Publishing (Mar 15, 2019)

Softcover \$16.00 (112pp)

978-1-73200-914-1

Heidi Seaborn's poetry collection *Give a Girl Chaos* wields everyday language with immense skill, resulting in an expansive work. These poems encompass the range of human emotion. They travel around the globe and from idea to idea, making obvious the range of Seaborn's experiences and insights.

Though they are mostly free verse, the poems hop between various forms from one entry to the next. Dynamic in form, many spread words across the entire page, giving the sense of a whirling, omnipresent voice speaking poetic truths. At other times, the poems veer farther from convention. The poignant "Crossing the Dead Sea" includes a border line separating the piece's meditation on Israel and the West Bank.

Topics range from general observations on grief or chaos to particular reflections. "After the Battles," noted to revolve around a historical landscape where two Spanish Civil War battles took place, reads:

*My camellias blossom in winter,
blood red petals
I cup in my palm, bruising
the blossoms brown.*

In this piece and others, it is easy to get lost in the stirring language, which sculpts the setting and its characters with a careful, deft hand.

The collection excels in its ability to transform the personal into the political and the universal. The speaker always feels all-knowing but is somehow also capable of being anyone. In particular, *Give a Girl Chaos* speaks on the poet's personal struggles—for example, exposing the innards of a collapsing marriage through "At the End of Our Marriage, You Contract Congestive Heart Failure" or the sometimes crushing reality of gendered care in "Housework."

What could be a collection of individual events pulls itself into a corporeal exercise because of masterful language. *Give a Girl Chaos* eloquently and effortlessly exposes the vulnerability and beauty in all of us.

MYA ALEXICE (March/April 2019)

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