



Imminence

Mariana Dimópulos

Alice Whitmore, Translator

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In Mariana Dimópulos's novel *Imminence*, a woman fears the resurgence of her aimless, unhappy past.

Though she's been pressured to marry, have children, and behave in subservient, restrictive ways, the narrator doesn't fit the mold of traditional womanhood. Her actions take on a performative quality: she is polite because it is expected, acts in certain ways because that is "what women do," and allows others to shape her views. Even living itself comes to feel unnatural to her.

The woman also feels detached from her newborn son, whom she often refers to as "it"; she is plagued by a sense of disconnect after his birth. This is followed by brief joy, though unease and a sense of inevitability then descend.

Here, over the course of a single evening, she recalls the people who shaped her life: an elderly relative whom she stayed with as a teenager; a friend from young adulthood who resisted and then succumbed to the desire for children; and an older cousin whose persistence threatens her chance at happiness. Her wistful tone betrays her yearning for these lost loved ones, as well as her desire for a place to call her own.

Even though the pressure to conform never ends, the narrator fights it in vague ways. She finds solace in logic and numbers (which, unlike people, never change, die, or leave); still, it takes decades for her to find a place to call home. Even from there, a lifetime's worth of pressure and incongruity may not let her go. The past is an irresistible force toward the novel's ambiguous end, which only makes it plain that the narrator's life will never be the same.

In the somber novel *Imminence*, a woman grapples with love, loss, and femininity.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (September / October 2021)

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