



Sing, Nightingale

Marie H el ene Poitras

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Coach House Books (Feb 14, 2023)

Softcover \$17.95 (176pp)

978-1-55245-448-0

An enticing visitor spells doom—or a new beginning—for a distinguished but troubled family line in Marie H el ene Poitras's novel *Sing, Nightingale*.

The Berthoumieux men have been caught in an endless cycle of control, lust, forbidden desires, and death for generations. Though once prosperous and influential, the sun was already setting on their fortunes when Ali enor, a woman with a mysterious past and motive, came to stay. Her arrival signals a reckoning for the family patriarch and threatens to unearth the secrets that have long been hidden in plain sight.

The narrative unfolds like a stage play, with the settings and characters arriving one by one to assume their places in the grand drama. Malmaison estate is an eerie place with a dark history and unusual customs. Its waning glory is felt in its dwindling livestock and the abandoned secondary house where Ali enor now takes up residence. The surrounding forest and nearby village are just as unnerving, providing both nourishment and a place to conceal the most gruesome crimes.

Time seems to work differently at Malmaison: though years pass and occupants change, the same patterns and fates overcome them in the end, with both men and women—but women most severely—being punished for their desires. In this way, the narrative uses fantasy to explore real-world problems of the human need for power and control.

As Ali enor stumbles closer to the truth, the Berthoumieux family undergoes changes both natural and strange. The old ways crumble in incredible fashion, and the family is set on a new path that will lay the past to rest and at last bring Malmaison into the future.

Sing, Nightingale is a twisted, haunting tale of jealousy, murder, and vengeance in the countryside.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (March / April 2023)

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