



## The Afflicted Girls

**Cathleen Calbert**

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Like some white-coated poet-anthropologist, Cathleen Calbert's ginned-up history of notable off-center women takes dead aim at what you thought you knew. A Pushcart Prize and *The Nation* Discovery award winner\*, *The Afflicted Girls*\* is her fourth collection.

FLAPPER

Shrinks said, *Inferiority complex*. Yes,  
dilettantes can be a pain in the ass.

Still, Zelda, Scott's cyclone, his only god,  
there's something to be said for being

a personality, your greatest creation the girl  
who didn't give a fig for respectability

and caused scenes, stewed at parties,  
before you got off the sauce for good,

nothing but whole milk and sanitariums  
after you cracked up too badly to mend,

then turned into the cuckoo, the mad widow,  
in the end identified by a charred slipper.

Listen, ripping that much life out of youth  
is quite an accomplishment too.

MATT SUTHERLAND (Winter 2017)

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