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Kingdom Animalia (American Poets Continuum)



Synopsis

The poems in this highly anticipated second book are elegiac poems, as concerned with honoring our dead as they are with praising the living. Through Aracelis Girmay's lens, everything is animal: the sea, a jukebox, the desert. In these poems, everything possesses a system of desire, hunger, a set of teeth, and language. These are poems about what is both difficult and beautiful about our time here on earth. Aracelis Girmay's debut collection won the Great Lakes Colleges Association New Writers Award. A Cave Canem Fellow, she is on the faculty at Drew University and Hampshire College. She lives in Brooklyn, New York.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Aracelis Girmay's second collection "Kingdom Animalia" has been one of the definitive voices of my life since line one, poem one. Its precise movements, its every detail an invitation, its reflection of an author who never stops seeing life as a mechanism for discovery, its wild hilarious, its heartbreak, and near proof that nothing in this world is ever truly gone. We get to watch Girmay listen and give as the poems and narratives bloom from the page. In "Abuelo, Mi Muerto" she writes, "Abuelo, if the pigeons can wear / the same face in every city, / the same red feet, singing / the same songs & so on, / can't you come back, Abuelo? / Tell me which are the graves / I should visit & clean. Which river / I should bring my flowers to. / Which of the miracles / fills your marigold chest? / Which is the joke you loved the most? / What is the name of the desert / I should thank? Come back / in a body I

can see from the window / of this crowded city train. / Board the train. Sit / beside me for a while & tell me things. / Do not let me mistake you / for a shadow or a gull. / & if I start to pass you on the street, / Abuelo, shout my name, shout / it, please. Tug my shirt or hair. / Make me turn. Just a moment. / Send me home with a message / my mother will believe." This motor threads the entire collection. She has gifted us a new translation for the language of the world. Of the lines of history that have birthed us. You leave these pages knowing metaphor has always been reality, and that memory is its own lifetime. Be careful. It's not enough to read Kingdom Animalia. Your body will make a community of it, and ache to place this book into all the hands you love most.

This is one of the most moving books of poetry I've read in the last year. Her voice has a great consistency and authority in these arrestingly beautiful, confessional poems. As a poet, I am highly jealous of this book -- it's doing all the things I aim to do, but better. I hope to teach it next fall.

i have read this book and re-read this book over and always. aracelis writes of the deep-grief-deep-joy-laughter-and-weep of it all " is so gentle & so observant with the page, the ampersand, the malleability of the line. her work is a world not imploding nor exploding but caught in that place of -plode. where it is all and is all at once. & so wonderfully. all the heart, with all its drums and wingings, are here. present, within.

Organic and embodied, Raw and alive. Speaking the truth in metaphor and melody. Would recommend this book because she can reach through the heart of pain to touch what matters.

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