





In this provocative first full collection, novelist and poet Helen Cox explores the female experience of sex, power, violence and body politics.

Marrying sensual love poems with searing commentary on the institutions that seek to diminish women, and their right to unapologetic self-expression, this book says what others dare not.

The poems in this volume are accompanied by exclusive portraits taken by photographer Andrew Douglas which complement Cox's raw and potent imagery.

Whether acknowledging those who indulge in less-accepted corners of sexuality, including the BDSM and DDLG lifestyle, or squaring up to misogyny directly, Cox's work remains unflinching throughout.



Poet's Manifesto

In the early days I convinced myself I was just listening to too much Lana Del Rey. And these poems were nothing more than an exploration of art and violence and sex and power. And that had all been done before and wasn't so revolutionary.

And who reads poetry anyway these days, when the minute hand ticks ever backward on women's rights and we're still all told we should smile more?

But writing these poems taught me just how many disguises Misogyny hangs in his wardrobe.

He is a shapeshifter unafraid to manifest as woman.

And I am his Final Girl.

His Laurie Strode.

Each poem, a knitting needle stabbed through his neck.

This book, his public unmasking.



Stiletto Feminism for Beginners

I'll be your private peep show Daddy,
in my five-inch heels.
Germaine Greer won't approve of my push-up bra
but that's part of its appeal.

I'll be your private peep show, Daddy,
and deny those scholars who speculate
that I can't be thrown over your knee for a spanking,
and reserve my rights to equal pay.

So, watch me suck my fingers and imagine
I'm your little doll –
a term they'll denounce as degrading,
when they debate it in their lecture halls
while we grind in our private peep show, Daddy;



Drinking Bourbon With You

After Frank O'Hara

is even more exciting than my plane touching down in New York,
partly because you once told me
this brand tastes like my voice: warm, rich, husky,
partly because our love is a secret
locked in the Federal Reserve vaults
and sharing a drink, just us two,
your hand on my thigh under the table
is the closest we'll come
to doing what normal couples do
and I would rather look at you than the Manhattan skyline at dusk,
or magenta leaves at Corona Park in autumn,
or Pollock's canvases at the Gug,
because the grey cloud of your beard is its own abstract masterpiece
and your cologne smells like horse chestnuts
and your need to worship me is writ across your face in neon
and who needs the East River
when there is the blue grey of your eyes
and who needs the Chrysler reaching for heaven
when your erection is pressing against my hip
and who needs October dew on spider webs
when you have your own wolf to hibernate with
and who needs art
when there is someone in the world aching to rip your clothes off.



Ode to Your Belt Buckle

The gentle jingle as you unhook your belt
is more rousing than my wedding bells.
Stretched between your fists
the black leather line
Good Feminists told me never to cross.
You brandish it with the same zeal
prehistoric man held charcoal and iron oxides.
Aching to make your mark.
My ass your canvas,
where you'll graffiti
We were here! We were alive!
in red ochre.



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Features original portrait photography by Andrew Douglas.

Review copies and interviews with the poet available on request.

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