

Bonfire Opera: Poems (Pitt Poetry Series)

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Sometimes the most compelling landscapes are the ones where worlds collide: where a desert meets the sea, a civilization, no-man's land. Here in *Bonfire Opera*, grief and Eros grapple in the same domain. A bullet-hole through the heart, a house full of ripe persimmons, a ghost in a garden. Coyotes cry out on the hill, and lovers find themselves kissing, "bee-stung, drunk" in the middle of road. Here, the dust is holy, as is the dark, unknown. These are poems that praise the impossible, wild world, finding beauty in its wake.

Excerpt from "Bonfire Opera"

In those days, there was a woman in our circle
who was known, not only for her beauty,
but also for taking off all her clothes and singing opera.
And sure enough, as the night wore on and the stars
emerged to stare at their reflections on the sea,
and everyone had drunk a little wine,
she began to disrobe, loose her great bosom
and the tender belly, pale in the moonlight,
the Viking hips, and to let her torn raiment
fall to the sand as we looked up from the flames.

Danusha Lamris is the author of *The Moons of August*, selected by Naomi Shihab Nye as the winner of the Autumn House Press poetry prize and was a finalist for the Milt Kessler Book Award. Some of her poems have been published in: *The Best American Poetry*, *The New York Times*, *The American Poetry Review*, *Tin House*, *The Gettysburg Review*, and *Ploughshares*. She teaches poetry independently, and is the current Poet Laureate of Santa Cruz County, California. "Bonfire Opera, Danusha Lameris' ravishing second collection of poems, lives up to its title and then some. In melodic and sumptuous lines, she considers desire, sorrow, beauty and death. This is a collection you will want to keep close, "a reminder to begin, again, by listening carefully with the body's rapt attention."-Ellen Bass

"No experience is more fulfilling than reading the work of a writer who is a master of her craft-of feeling like the book you are immersed in is an entire world. This is what it is like reading Danusha Lamris' *Bonfire Opera*. Everything is alive in these poems, even loss. Even death. In these finely crafted lyrics, worms, berries, skin, hawks, dirt and desire exist and even thrive in a symbiotic relationship that is a model for a new way of thinking. If a book can be smart and funny and dark and wise and vulnerable and beautiful all at the same time, this one is. In one of her best poems, Lamris writes, "This is what I've made here, a garden, a feast.' That's for sure. *Bonfire Opera* is a feast you'll want to devour and a garden that will never stop yielding."-Dean Rader, University of San Francisco

Other Books

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