

Pruyn

Lena

Poems

Cassie Pruyn's Lena asks new questions: why we love, why we grieve. We've read elegies before, but not like this. A lush and unsparing first book, Lena asks readers to understand love--crucially, a first love, an erotic love-in the context not of a love lost but instead of an identity gained: we must consider not only "was she worth it?," but also "who has she made me?" Pruyn lets us feel what lovers feel--the magnetism, the physicality, the tenderness, the rage, the wondering--with language both musical and visceral. In these poems, the landscape is a character in itself; the past is as tangible as the present. Pruyn takes us to the "Lost Love Lounge," we ride in a "car / red as a dragon," and we observe the beloved "stick herself in the belly with a needle" in the way "she used to attach her cufflinks." This is love and grief raised to the highest power; it is a debut not to be missed.

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