



Days of Shame & Failure

Jennifer L. Knox

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It's hard to resist using a game show announcer's voice when discussing Jennifer Knox's latest collection, *Days of Shame & Failure*. Knox knows how to draw human complexity out of absurdity and kitsch (and vice versa) without positioning herself above it. She is one of us, sharing our fear and wonder, and we feel this sense of community as if there were five million other viewers—a spin on Whitman's "multitudes"—watching along with us to see how she makes it out of each lyrically harrowing poem. Is that camp? Is it satire? Who cares! "Whatever it is," as one poem reports, it gives me "a real, really felt feeling," and that's what I'm a sucker for every time. —Gregory Pardlo, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for *DIGEST* Jennifer L. Knox is one of our funniest writers, but what places her work in a realm of its own is the empathy that surrounds, contradicts, and occasionally undermines the joke, sending us far beyond the punch line. Written from the far edge of vast experience, these poems lyricize the post-beatdown quality of middle age. The marvelously capacious *Days of Shame & Failure* is the work of a genius at her peak, the best book yet from one of our most brilliant and sui generis American writers. —Sarah Manguso, author of *ONGOINGNESS* Jennifer L. Knox is an iconic American poet whose work has been compared to Richard Pryor, Sarah Silverman, cartoonist R. Crumb, musician Randy Newman, and magician Doug Henning. None of these comparisons is quite right, however. Knox's work is unmistakably her own: surprisingly empathetic, utterly original, both funny and frightening, like America itself. And like the best comedians, she is never merely funny: each of her speakers has something important to say. Knox's poems have appeared four times in the Best American Poetry series and in the anthologies *Great American Prose Poems: From Poe to Present* and *Best American Erotic Poems*, as well as in such publications as the *New York Times*, the *New Yorker*, *American Poetry Review*, and *McSweeney's*. Her first three books of poems are also available from Bloof Books: *The Mystery of the Hidden Driveway*, *Drunk by Noon*, and *A Gringo Like Me*.

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