



Girl Show

Kristy Bowen

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Poetry. Set in the 1930's midwest and adrift in the surreal world of bird girls and sideshow mermaids, **GIRL SHOW** explores the boundaries between spectacle and domesticity, between beauty and grotesquerie. Each poem inhabits the strangeness at the edges of the commonplace, where the real world falls away to the whirl of carnival lights and tented shadows.

"Kristy Bowen's poems unfold like a fairy tale pop-up book; open like a cabinet of wonders in which girl is both cabinet and wonder; flame and spark into the night air where we read by that light. In a collection so rich in image—milk and angels and vinegar, the trap door and the hemline, bees and a line of low clouds—I'm struck even more by those seemingly small words of relationship—the prepositions—behind, against, inside, beneath beneath beneath. These poems arise from the 'rubied dark' where the Louises and Livvies and Coras live, frightened and yet defiant, and return there, with us in tow."—Mary Ann Samyn

"The poems in Kristy Bowen's brilliantly musical **GIRL SHOW** capture the details of domestic life gone delicately, mysteriously wrong: 'My salt shakers shaped like ducks. My ducks shaped like / killers.' In this map of bruised doors and broken windows, house after house reveals burnt staircases and ghostly inhabitants. The girls displayed in these illuminated rooms 'speak softly while night ... knocks us out, / knocks us up.' These gorgeous lyrics document dangerous histories, the marginalia that matters most. Bowen's dreamy, eerie poems create a subversively gothic landscape: 'mile after mile of busted / lunchboxes glinting in the sun.'"—Carol Guess

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