

# Among the Dead: Ah! and Afterward Yes!

Becca Jensen

Winner of the inaugural Les Fignes Press NOS Book Prize as selected by guest judge Sarah Shun-lien Bynum

A family of five, Mrs. G, Mr. G and the daughter, along with a chorus and a collector (ghostly cousins perhaps or kindred ghosts or genealogists extraordinaire), inhabit Becca

Jensen's *Among the Dead: Ah! and Afterward Yes!*. The family's home rests on the foundations of English and classical literature; the lilt and language of which seep through the floorboards and into the air they breathe. Reading becomes the basis for living. Imagination mingles seamlessly with reality. And interpretation is the main form of play, and the play, dear sirs, is the thing.

Winner of the inaugural Les Fignes Press NOS (Not Otherwise Specified) Contest as selected by guest judge Sarah Shun-lien Bynum, *Among the Dead: Ah! and Afterward Yes!* is Jensen's first full-length collection. These are poems of adventure and event, sequences and moments, and behind each is the possibility of finding comfort, kinship—or at the very least, meaning—in our stories and the world around them.

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*Among the Dead: Ah! and Afterward Yes!*

Becca Jensen

Foreword: Sarah Shun-lien Bynum

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## ABOUT BECCA JENSEN

**Becca Jensen** writes and reads from her home in Nashville. Her poems have appeared in *Slope*, *Horse Less Review*, *Handsome* and *Drunken Boat*. *Among the Dead: Ah! and Afterward Yes!* is her first book.

**PRAISE FOR *AMONG THE DEAD: AH! AND AFTERWARD YES!*** \_\_\_\_\_

“What has Becca Jensen done? First, she has taken all of English literature and embodied it in a family of three. Then, as if that weren’t daredevil enough, she’s woven an abecedarius in the form of footnotes containing quotes from the canon between poems that chronicle the family’s odd antics. Mother is pathos. Father is form and limits. The daughter is that Baudelairean other, the reader out for adventure but enslaved to boredom. This book is not only a feat of innovation, it refreshes our sense of awareness that literature is a vast mirror and human experience the grand spectacle that gets reflected in it.”

—Mary Jo Bang

“*Among the Dead: Ah! And Afterward Yes!* is a grand love story. There’s the family at hand (and may every Mr. G find his Mrs., amen)—but beyond and deeper, this is a book born of a mad love. *Ah!* is an ode to how what we read infiltrates at the cellular level, re-writing us. Who would we be without it, *Ah!* asks us to ask ourselves, offering up this family canon-born and bred, with its wildly adventurous offspring. Like a true ode, there’s joy in the offing. I’d follow this daughter anywhere.”

—Kerri Webster

“*[Among the Dead]* reminds us of the family that, through the act of reading, we come home to. Yes, this book is haunted by loss, by orphans and shipwrecks and drowning, yet when one’s ‘mother is a fisherman’ and one’s ‘father is the sea,’ drowning can be a kind of homecoming.”

—Sarah Shun-lien Bynum