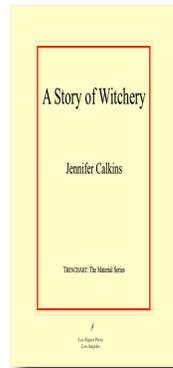


Contact: Teresa Carmody, editor / Les Figs Press / 323.934.5898 / trose@olywa.net



A Story of Witchery

a poem by Jennifer Calkins
illustrated by Sarah Lane
with an Introduction by Amy Gerstler
Les Figs Press
ISBN 0-9766371-4-6
167 pp. / \$15.00 US

Publication date: January 2006
Distributed by: Small Press Distribution

Fantasy, fear, and freedom all play parts in **A STORY OF WITCHERY**, a new book-length narrative poem by Jennifer Calkins. Here we meet Emily, our “small and weedy” protagonist, an orphan complicit (perhaps) in her own abandonment, and who is caught up, as poet Amy Gerstler writes in her Introduction, in a story “entwined with science facts and twisted clinical fictions.” In language rolling and tripping with spare precision, Calkins makes a modern pilgrim’s progress into the imagination and the dark world of medicine. Rich and haunting images create an environment of seeming familiarity which, like the internal landscape of the protagonist, dissolves only to reform, until finally resolving into a healed whole.

Praise for A STORY OF WITCHERY

“Calkins’ *A Story of Witchery* puts us deep into the woods of Freud’s uncanny, remembering that he says ‘What is heimlich...comes to be *unheimlich*.’ Reading this you think ‘I’ve gone through this before, maybe in Goethe, Grimm, Seuss, C. S. Lewis’ *Screwtape Letters*, a creepy Rachel Ingalls story,’ but then you read a stanza such as ‘Bazooka bubblegum/could remind one/of something like/a lovely...’ and you realize that this place is commonly stranged. In her weird and wired teratological poem, this poet sings through an olde mist to show us that horror still has its lessons to teach.”

—Eric Elshtain, Beard of Bees Press / www.beardofbees.com

“*Witchery* is so sly, so bizarre, so unpredictable, so unpredictably beautiful at every sly and bizarre and unpredictable turn, that I found myself reading it straight through, unable to stop, and then I found myself hungry to read it again. We follow Calkins’ anti-heroine, ‘Emily’ -- Emily Dickinson? Alice in Wonderland? The poet herself? -- through a fantastical narrative, darkly hilarious and hilariously terrifying; part Grimms’ fairytale, part cartoon, part wildly meta-feminist journey through deformity and beauty. And in the midst of the adventure we’re stopped, breathless, by a line of words, an image, language so sharp and lovely it almost hurts: ‘sugar cracks beneath her nails;’ ‘the shadow of the flames leapt up again/and licked the sky like dark petals/gathering themselves into/a single/glowing flower.’ And then, ‘and then...’”

—Cecilia Woloch, author of *Late*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Jennifer Calkins is a poet and evolutionary biologist. Her work has been published in a variety of journals and anthologies including *4th Street*, *Into the Teeth of the Wind*, *Big Bridge*, *Ken*Again* and *Encyclopedia of Animal Behavior*. Her chapbook, *Devil Card*, was published by Beard of Bees Press. She lives in Seattle and teaches at the University of Washington.