



Half Wild: Poems (Walt Whitman Award of the Academy of American Poets)

Mary Rose O'Reilly

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Half Wild is spiritual biography wound backwards, spiraling into the world rather than out of it. Though it reflects on the paradoxes of our violent times, Mary Rose O'Reilley's collection hangs on to life like the bee "up to his hips in love" who "will fall asleep in the snow" and "wake up still kissing his flower." In O'Reilley's poems, human, animal, and mineral creations interpenetrate and share surreal conversation -- even stones exchange stories of "hot times in the magma" and animals are listened to intently. Here sacred inquiry is grounded in a passion for the natural world, resolving questions through lyric, erotic, and sensual response. The poems of Half Wild revel in desire and longing as instruments of theological critique.

You were the part of me

that gave itself to death.Sometimes I dream of eyes,sealed with a membraneof unknowing

like a mystic's veil,that open to my glance without surprise.Sometimes I dream

of perfect understanding.Sometimes I snatchat hands that seem to seekas through a caul.

Sometimes I wakenWith an infant's shriek. -- from "Twin"

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