



May Day: Poems

Gretchen Marquette

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*You arrive at my altar
with no idea*

*what it means to worship--to adore.
You haven't even learned it:*

*ecstasy and suffering
make the same face.*

--from "The Offering"

May Day is both a distress call and a celebration of the arrival of spring. In this rich and unusually assured first collection, the poet Gretchen Marquette writes of the losses of a brother gone off to war in Afghanistan and Iraq, and a great love--losses that have left the world charged with absence and grief. But there is also the wonder of the natural world: the deer at the edge of the forest, the dog reliably coaxing the poet beyond herself and into the city park where by tradition every May Day is pageantry, a festival of surviving the long winter. "What does it mean to be in love?" one poem asks. "As it turns out, / the second best thing that can happen to you / is a broken heart."

May Day introduces readers to a new poet of depth and power.

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