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*Fault* (review)

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***Fault.*****By Katharine Coles.**

Los Angeles, CA: Red Hen Press, 2008. 93 pages, \$18.95.

**Reviewed by Genevieve Betts**

Arizona State University, Tempe

This fourth poetic work by Katharine Coles layers motifs of disaster, love, and science using numerous arrangements. The book opens with the section "Accidental" and, as the title suggests, investigates life's misfortunes. The speakers of these poems testify to catastrophes such as bombs and fires. In the poem "Good Eye," Coles allows the audience to peer out the window of her witnessing eye, and the speaker's gaze eventually rests on an earthquake in Turkey: "Across the ocean, fault will turn a city: / Shaken, it undoes us, wall by wall" (15). What naturally follows these dangerous events is an examination of life's brevity. In the last lines of this poem, she writes, "*Another breath, another day.* / Short on miracles, what else can I do / But count them down to measure my long luck" (15). These lines illustrate our brief existence and the accidents or good luck that make the difference.

The second segment of poems, "The Double Leash," explores human relationships and love among people, animals, and nature. Many times, Coles uses forms such as ghazals and pantoums, weaving slant rhymes into intricate rhythms. Starting with human relationships, Coles turns her focus first to marriage. In the poem "Marriage: Ghazal," she opens with the inquiry, "What's lost in love? What retrieved? It could be / we lose ourselves to make love what could be" (42). Here, the push and pull of romantic relationships chafes against individual identity. Coles portrays a similar movement between humans and animals. The poem "The Double Leash" examines this connection as the speaker walks her dogs. They tug against each restraint as she concludes:

Mediums between  
foreign principalities, they're tied  
to me, to each other, by my will,  
by love; to that other realm  
by song, and tooth, and blood. (50-51)

Again, the nature of bonds oscillates between a give and take, never moving in a straight line.

In "Alchemy," the final section, Coles continues her play with forms, but rather than sonnets and ghazals, she pulls inspiration from scientific theories. In "Outside Newton's House," the speaker examines her experi-

ence of visiting Newton's house in the form of the scientific method. She imagines Newton inside and asks, "Could he change his fortune? / In this room I peer at, hands cupped to glass, / He dreams on" (68). Here, Coles returns to themes of fate and sets the reader's gaze on Newton's pacing ghost. These poems also move between the scientific and the spiritual, and she blends the two rather than seeing them as opposites.

In an era where large-scale disasters abound, these poems speak to those with their eyes fixed on life's urgent unfolding. A glance through this window reveals moments where relationships, tragedy, and invention collide in the course luck allows. In the final poem, "Middle Ages," Coles emphasizes the interplay between the past and fortune one last time: "History cannot be left to chance. // Our histories won't leave us, though even chance / fails in the end" (91).

***Massacre at Mountain Meadows.***

**By Ronald W. Walker, Richard E. Turley Jr., and Glen M. Leonard.**

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. 430 pages, \$29.95.

**Reviewed by Pamela Pierce**

Utah State University, Logan

*Massacre at Mountain Meadows* meticulously describes the historical circumstances that led up to the massacre, still one of the most controversial events in LDS history. Written by LDS Church historians, this latest entry in Mountain Meadows scholarship attempts to escape the common approach of saying the Fancher Party were simply innocent victims on the journey west. Using new archival research, Walker, Turley, and Leonard strive to accurately represent the historical context surrounding the event.

The Mountain Meadows Massacre occurred on September 11, 1857, during a time when the LDS Church was on the brink of war with the US government. However, the book opens with the arrival of Mormon pioneers in July 1847 in the Salt Lake Valley. Descriptions of the violence in Missouri and Nauvoo, Illinois, significantly add to current understanding of the events that led up to Mountain Meadows in which 120 people were killed, including women and children. Photographs bring to life the LDS men involved in the violent act so that they stand as real characters. The research incorporates testimonials from the time period and evaluates their historical accuracy, a move that will prove useful for historians.

In the preface, the authors clearly define their goal as not simply providing a response to other histories that have already studied the massacre. The authors write, "Rather, we would take a fresh approach based upon