"Corey Van Landingham begins Antidote in thoughtful, measured denial—not, can’t, nor, never mind, a place of soul and heart where you only ‘think crossing over a body of water equals acquiring the other side.’ Nevertheless, so much goes on to live in this fine book: litany, rage, grief, love, certain moments of startling ventriloquism then back to the real self restless, said to mean, hunting maps to hymnals, hawks and gulls and fevers, even ‘the dirt’s push & pulse’ all overriding that first impossible no. ‘People die when I’m not looking,’ this poet tells us. Good thing she looks.” —Marianne Boruch

“In this debut collection, Van Landingham reinvents and refines surrealism, which has always been one of the many fashions worn on the flamboyant runway of American poetry. I think of Dickinson’s white dress and ‘White Heat’ in the presence of these poems, so formally various, too street smart to promenade the avenues without irony, but unabashedly emotive, no makeup. The book is haunted. The poet converses with her dead father and with former lovers, and discovers there is no antidote against any of it. In the penultimate poem, Van Landingham says, ‘wild is a process / that has to be learned.’ I don’t know where she has learned such wildness, but she has learned it well.” —Donald Platt

“Already I feel changed by Antidote—this heady, haunting new collection with its strange and seductive proposals. Corey Van Landingham takes us on an endlessly inventive, exhilarating journey that transports us past conventional perception and language, past ‘the airspace for all the monologues worth flying from.’ These poems hold us close and throw us far, plunging and soaring without turning away from the disasters at their hearts. This is the real thing: unflinching, urgent, luminous work. I will turn to it again and again.” —Mary Szybist

In Corey Van Landingham’s Antidote, love equates with disease, valediction is a contact sport, the moon is a lunatic, and someone is always watching. Here the uncanny coexists with the personal, so that each poem undergoes making and unmaking, is birthed and bound in an acute strangeness. Elegy is made new by a speaker both heartbreaking and transgressive. Van Landingham reveals the instability of self and perception in states of grief; she is not afraid to tip the world upside down and shake it out, gather the lint and change from its pockets and say, “I can make something with this.”

Wild and surreal, driven by loss, Antidote invites both the beautiful and the brutal into its arms, allowing for shocking declarations about love: that it is like hibernation, a car crash, or a parasite. Time, geography, and landscape are called into question as backdrops for various forms of valediction. It soon becomes clear that there is no antidote one can take for grief or heartbreak; that love can, at times, feel like violence; and that one may never get better at saying goodbye.

Corey Van Landingham is a Wallace Stegner Poetry Fellow at Stanford University. She grew up in Oregon and holds degrees from Lewis & Clark College and Purdue University, where she was a Poetry Editor for Sycamore Review. She is the recipient of an AWP Intro Journals Award and scholarships from the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference. Her poems have appeared in Best New Poets 2012, Indiana Review, The Kenyon Review, The Southern Review, and elsewhere.

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