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Night Ringing

Laura Foley

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“I revel in the genius of simplicity” Laura Foley writes as she gives us in plain-spoken but deeply lyrical moments, poems that explore a life filled with twists and turns and with many transformations. Through it all is a search for a fulfilling personal and sexual identity, a way to be most fully alive in the world. From multicultural love affairs through marriage with a much older man, through raising a family, through grief, to lesbian love affairs, *Night Ringing* is the portrait of a woman willing to take risks to find her own best way. And she does this with grace and wisdom. As she says: “All my life I’ve been swimming, not drowning.”
—Patricia Fargnoli, author of *Winter, Duties of the Spirit,* and *Then, Something*

I love the words and white space of poetry. I love stories even more. In this collection, Laura Foley evokes stories of crystallized moments, of quiet and overpowering emotion, of bathtubs and lemon chicken. The author grows up on the pages, comes of age, and reconciles past with present. Almost. Try to put the book down between poems to savor each experience. Try, but it won't be easy.
—Joni B. Cole, author of *Toxic Feedback, Helping Writers Survive and Thrive*

Plain-spoken and spare, Laura Foley’s poems in *Night Ringing* trace a life story through a series of brief scenes: separate, intense moments of perception, in which the speaker’s focus is arrested, when a moment opens to reveal a glimpse of the larger whole. Memories of a powerful, enigmatic father, a loving but elusive mother, a much older husband, thread Foley’s stories of childhood, marriage and motherhood, finally yielding to the pressure of her attention, as she constructs a series of escapes from family expectations, and moves toward a new life. In these lucid, intense poems, Foley’s quiet gaze, her concentration, and emotional accuracy of detail, render this collection real as rain.
—Cynthia Huntington, author of *Heavenly Bodies*

Foley’s voice rings with quiet authority undercut by calamity, examining a life so extraordinary, she seems to have lived several people’s lives, setting a high bar for poetic craft she meets, in great mystery perfectly expressed in the tiny, quotidian, “spent matches pressed on wet pavement,” to soulful beauty, “as wind lifts/every shining wave”; in wisdom rooted in humor, from the deliciously funny “Flunking Jung,” to self-deprecating wit, misreading “poetic” as “pathetic,” reminding us wisdom is love, grown from self-compassion.
—April Ossmann, author of *Anxious Music*

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