

The Brick House

The Brick House a place where people dream of love and loneliness, of the world's beauty, and of ongoing environmental degradation. In this short but moving work, travelers confront their lives in the strange, elemental language which dreams allow for, a strangeness mirrored in the accompanying illuminations created by artist and writer Fowzia Karimi. Inspired by Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* and following in the tradition of Armenian illuminated manuscripts, THE BRICK HOUSE is a delight to the eye and mind.

Fowzia Karimi has a background in Visual Arts and Biology. She has an MFA in Creative Writing from Mills College. In her work, she combines the written and visual arts to tell stories. Her first novel, *Above Us the Milky Way*, will be published by Deep Vellum in April 2020. She lives in Texas.

Reviews

“My favourite book of fiction this year...Fragmentary, ambiguous, fantastic, *The Brick House* is a celebratory work of the imagination.” —**Jason DeYoung**

“In *The Brick House*, Marcom contemplates evolution and degradation. She looks back at how the human hand tainted the wildness of the earth and how the same hand later violated Nature’s body. She looks ahead to the future to predict how Nature could fight to win back her innocent form.” —**Pif Magazine**

Excerpt

New Love I

She has seen the lover two times and on their second outing he kissed behind her ear on the back of her neck. And how did he know when he doesn't yet know the beloved, or she herself understand her desires (or how it is when the girl is on the cusp of new love, which is very much like the quiet places at the back of the sea before the swift current moves in) that this spot on her neck arouses her most of all? Today he begins to move down her spine. He lifts her onto his back and he carries her as he would carry his own mother. He bears her down the path and they begin to cross the river. They circle and entwine, he moves his arm over her arm, and his heart or thighs or cock vibrate, push against her body, lean into, move down, her spinal cord into her labia, her thighs, her feet. This is a beginning? she thinks, and she begins to feel afraid, for there is always terror at the threshold. It climbs up into her visions and the old father, the old lovers, return. They beat her, berate her, tell her that it is all for naught. And then the old husband arrives, he has walked through the mud and stands at the embankment, he shakes his tired black fist toward her from a distance: bitch, he says; not for you; you open your legs too callously, dirty.

But she will look at you and say something trivial about an incident at a roadside restaurant and you will laugh and lift her higher onto your back as you reach the other side. And there inside of your laugh-tones the girl falls down and lies like a child on the early summer grasses beneath the impending light of the crepuscule as it slips down softly and orange red-yellow to cover her body and the earth.