

Mirror in the Well

A woman's sexual awakening is a tragedy when the woman is married to someone other than the man who awakens her. But until then, her marriage, now doomed, was a sleepwalker's tragedy. This novel will shock and offend some readers. Unapologetically explicit in its language, extreme in some of the acts it catalogues, it makes no pretense of submission to middle-class decency, let alone to expectations of happy endings. All three people in this love triangle are flawed, damaged, human. Things fall apart, and the resolution is unclear. Why does she do it? Why should we read it? The answer is one word: Ecstasy. Micheline Aharonian Marcom has a genius for language that is not only beautiful in and of itself, but also engages the heart. Lusher than Marguerite Duras, more tender and erotic than Cormac McCarthy, but nearly as dark, this is a narrative masterpiece.

Reviews

"The text is filled with unflinchingly rendered sex scenes, stream of consciousness, mythology, dreams and dreamlike realities, all blurred into each other, resulting in a narrative that portrays with disturbing accuracy the intimate behaviors and thoughts of lovers. Through this vivid imagery, Marcom gives voice to the essence of obsession and sexuality while tracing the deterioration of relationships. This novel is a cultural, feminist and human statement, but at its core, it is an unrestrained exploration of the intersection of emotion and physical desires."

–Publishers Weekly

"Writing with rare candor about female sexuality and cosmic verve about eroticism as a portal to the realm of myth and archetypes, Marcom enters the circle of Anaïs Nin, Annie Ernaux, and Kate Braverman, a flame-fingered poet of the tyranny and divinity of the body, the treachery and radiance of the mind, and the terrors and revelations of ecstasy." **–Donna Seaman, Booklist**

"A wellspring of words, a work as much about sensuality and intimacy as it is about distancing and fragmentation. Her book reveals how profanity and vulgarity, and a throwing of all caution to the wind total surrender to the flesh, may be a portal for redemption and self-awareness, while simultaneously suggesting that this may also lead to uncertainty and loss." **–John Madera, Tarpaulin Sky**

Excerpt

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The girl in this story is not a girl, for she is now forty years old, and a mother of two children and becoming a divorcée and she works in a business, wears suits and tight shirts which she pays extra money to clean at the specialty dry cleaning stores; she pays bills and mortgages and takes her children to their lessons for improvement and cooks them dinners and organizes closets and drawers, discards rubbish and used-up items. The girl looks up from where she is seated on the sofa of her home, and there appear to be hundreds of small grey birds who settle into the bushes and then dash out for no reason she can ascertain, settle and dash, rush out and make a V in flight and return, the nexus disassembles and the flock explodes into the bush amidst wild cries and flight again and crash again into the brush and singing loudly. And this is not a usual home for the flock; she sees birds daily—the robins and blue jays and loud crows, the fast-green hummingbirds and the great blue heron which flies each morning over her home toward the state park and each evening back toward his home by the sea. But not these. And she then imagines that she sees the flock today because today she is feeling forlorn and abandoned, like a small girl, and doubting and the birds are on a long journey, the journey perhaps of their southern flight for the winter and she also would like to travel, would like some kind of flight, would like an outside of her ideas, the labyrinth of codes and conduct which keeps her close, inside of a closed circuit, and it is only her lover, this carpenter in a California city, who has undone the tight bands, who has leaked her soul out onto air again, like the small pockets of air beneath the bird-grey wings and lifting them, today, outside of the girl's window and into the sky.