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Rubble & Honey

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

RUBBLE & HONEY

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

in

CREATIVE WRITING

by

Megan Arlett

2017

To: Dean Michael R. Heithaus
College of Arts, Sciences & Education

This thesis, written by Megan Arlett, and entitled Rubble & Honey, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this thesis and recommend that it be approved.

Vernon Dickson

Denise Duhamel

Campbell McGrath, Major Professor

Date of Defense: March 1, 2017

The thesis of Megan Arlett is approved.

Dean Michael R. Heithaus
College of Arts, Sciences & Education

Andrés G. Gil
Vice President for Research and Economic Development
and Dean of the University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2017

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

RUBBLE & HONEY

by

Megan Arlett

Florida International University, 2017

Miami, Florida

Professor Campbell McGrath, Major Professor

RUBBLE & HONEY is a collection of poems unified by its use of language driven lyricism to recount personal narratives in the life of the poet. The poems in this manuscript depict the landscapes of California, Florida, Mississippi, the South Downs of England, and Anglesey off the northwest coast of Wales. The manuscript engages with these physical spaces, how the speaker reacts to the natural world and how these locations can reflect the internal.

The collection is broken into four sections: the first two explore parting, firstly from a relationship and then revisiting the poet's childhood landscape of Sussex, England; the third is a rebirth of sorts after the exploration of these losses, a joyous look at the world that is tentative but hopeful; and the fourth section revisits the themes of the first from a more distanced perspective.

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I.

Crossing Biscayne Bay

We do not wish to hurry. Snagged
by the currents, avoiding what has been left
on the shore, what we know.

Blue water, blue minds. Where do manatees
go when their bellies are filled with hose
water? Polluted, drunk on mankind.

This affair will annihilate us. Green shadows
must cover all of Florida —river-of-grass-state—
constant drift released impassive into the Atlantic.

A little light is filtering out of the palms,
their fronds spread wide like silence:
thin and sharp and full of hunger.

Daffodils in January

Little yellow smiles

pushing through the mildness,

eager and insistent.

Think, how they birthed themselves

blindly, how intuition drew them up.

Is this not what we all do?

One day they will grasp what's wrong,

each smile crystallizing

with the frost,

and you will wake beside a lover

you could not change,

though you tried.

Aubade in Los Angeles

After Laura Kasischke

August 1981, and someone's killing

couples from Santa Barbara

to Sacramento. A woman called Linda

sits with my father

beneath the buzz of a motel sign

drinking coffee in the yawning summer.

This is the year they drove the Pacific coast

through towns where men lay hobbled,

crockery balanced on their spines,

a treble clef of terror

in their wives' throats,

waiting for the sun to rise

like a final breath.

There's a degree of separation
between everything we see here.

All I know

is what my father told me. How
he should have married Linda, how
he isn't sure

why things fell apart,
the membrane of a college romance

worn away until it tore

revealing cigarettes, more souvenirs
than memories, and an emptiness
a little like walking the streets at night.