

NIGHTBOAT BOOKS

PRESS RELEASE

SOME BEHEADINGS

ADITI MACHADO

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A stunning debut collection that examines the geophilosophy of lyric poetry

Here the “beheaded” poet displaces her mind into the landscape, exploring territories as disparate as India’s Western Ghats and the cinematic Mojave Desert, as absurd as insomnia and dream. *Some Beheadings* asks three questions: “How does thinking happen?” “What does thinking feel like?” “How do I think about the future?” The second question takes primacy over the others, reflecting on what poets and critics have called “the sensuous intellect,” what needs to be felt in language, the contours of questions touched in sound and syntax.

One way to think of these crystalline (brilliant, light-filled, prismatic, latticed) poems is as interlocking gears in a jeweled surrealist watch that has been put to bed in a transparent glass case and yet, day after day, it refuses to sleep. The parts can be seen continually moving, although at variable speeds: as soon as one goes faster, another carefully slows its pace. Each element is mesmerizing in its elegance. To attempt to deconstruct these poems would be to blow them apart. That said, what can be said is—They are utterly contemporary. They are deeply intimate. They are the lashes of a forest of thought.—**Mary Jo Bang**

If John Ashbery’s *Some Trees* marked a new beginning for modern American poetry, Aditi Machado’s *Some Beheadings* renovates the poetics of indeterminacy for our transnational continuous present. Tracing migratory routes through the thickets and deserts of signification—from the Western Ghats to Marienbad and beyond—Machado arrives at something like a spiritual allegory for the disenchanting. “Grace not of but as / god,” is the subject of her post-universal grammar, “that unusable concept / used in excess.” The grace of such work opens new prospects—or prospects?—onto identity’s imperium: “& I is an orient in the sense that all things wend toward me.” Yet the spectre of sovereignty, in Machado’s literary imagination, remains ever haunted by its own linguistic predication. “I have lived,” observes this incomparable elegist of belonging, “is a way of saying something ceased.” —**Srikanth Reddy**

ADITI MACHADO is an Indian poet. Previous works include *Route: Marienbad* and her translation of Farid Tali’s *Prosopopoeia*. She is a PhD candidate in creative writing at the University of Denver.

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