

## *Balm of My Dreams*

Etchings by Fran Bull, Words by Carolyn Corbett

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In this fascinating joint project, artist Fran Bull and poet Carolyn Corbett have created a meditation on love and connection. Corbett's poetry, in English with a Spanish translation, accompanies and is punctuated by Bull's stunning etchings. The result seems almost better suited to an art installation than a book; the reader wishes he could immerse himself in a life-sized version.

At first glance, the book seems deeply somber. Its midnight blue pages are a void against which Corbett's words unfold in slashes of blood red. The palette of Bull's etchings—a symphony of steel blue and grey—seems cool. But this first impression is misleading.

These etchings are part of Bull's Suite Sweet, and each deals with the connections among us. "Rescue" shows a figure leaning down from above to embrace another. In "Street Scene," two figures stroll together, arms firmly encircling each other's waists. Despite their monochromatic palette, these figures glow from within. Look closely at the graffiti in the background of each etching; it is exuberant. Men and women, adults and children, even a joyous reunion between dog and human—all highlight forms of love.

Corbett's poetry is spare, like beads strung across the pages. Her language tells of the cycles of love; a force that blows in like a gust and out again, but that brings connection and new life when it sweeps back in. "So teeth to teeth. So toe to toe/  
The old grass will grow. / The wind shall blow. / 'Til every lasting last."

Taken in concert with Bull's art, Corbett's words remind us that love is an endless wheel. "Oh, love, love. / Balm of my dreams. / You come and go." But when it comes, love is brilliant, exhilarating joy.

Artist Fran Bull lives in Vermont. She has exhibited throughout the world. Her work is represented in numerous private and public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, DC. *Mordant Rhymes for Modern Times*, for which she did the drawings, won the American Institute of Graphic Arts Book Design Award.

Carolyn Corbett is a poet, independent filmmaker and performance artist. She recently conceived and implemented a Creative Writing Program for individuals recovering from acquired traumatic injuries to the brain and spinal cord. Ms. Corbett is in the process of producing a documentary film about these individuals and their extraordinary stories of survival. Carolyn holds an MFA from New York University. She lives and works in New York.

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