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BOOK NEWS

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Sally Van Doren's *Possessive* Offers Bold and Beguiling Poems

Poet's Second Collection Available in November

Baton Rouge—Uttered in intense lyrical bursts that reflect the poet's command of language both familiar and strange, the visually dramatic moments gathered in *Possessive* probe the time-honored themes of love and death with candor and intimacy. The poems range in tone from a tongue-twisting search for identity to a plea to engage others in the refutation of pain: "My discreet sorrow / Hides in the dichotomy / Of your duplicitous palm / Offer me your hand / Our patty-cake will / Clap away antipathy."

Drawing from sources as varied as the Bible, pop music, American politics, Italian Renaissance architecture, and poetry from Catullus to Wallace Stevens to OuLiPo, the poems unite in their unabashed examination of the uncertainties of life. In several poems, the voice of Eve reimagines the repercussions of original sin. In others, Van Doren chronicles vehicles of present-day suffering, "e-mailed poultices," "day-glo ambulances," and being "drafted against our will into kinetic wilderness." Throughout the collection, recognitions of despair are counterbalanced by assertions of hope: "we dug for glory / for healing not / born from pain."

Sally Van Doren's first book, *Sex at Noon Taxes*, received the Walt Whitman Award from the Academy of American Poets. She has taught in the St. Louis Public Schools and curates the Sunday Poetry Series for the St. Louis Poetry Center.

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