

Megan Falley

Megan Falley obtained a BA in English from SUNY at New Paltz. She has been published in literary magazines including PANK and The Literary Bohemian. Her work has been featured on the podcast IndieFeed. She lives in NYC.



About the Book: After the Witch Hunt Due 2012

Fresh, lucid poetry. This new author showcases her arrival through a selection of work with a refreshing lack of jaded undertones. Her candor comes in brilliant form and takes the reader on a journey through the mind of this young poet, to reveal her stunning psyche. Armed with both humor and a brazen darkness, each poem in this book is another swing of the pick axe in this young woman's tunnel, insistent upon light.

Interview:

What is the theme of this book?

There isn't just one theme present in *After the Witch Hunt*. The book aims to give voice to a multitude of women: abuse survivors, sisters, sexualized cartoon characters, wives, women who have passed away,

women in the media, my own mother, myself. The book is a marriage between Humor and Darkness, the poems inside are what its like to sleep in that dichotic marital bed.

What was your Inspiration?

Most of the poems in *After the Witch Hunt* came out of necessity, as a mode of survival. When writing to survive, inspiration is abundant everywhere: train cars, television, death, the dictionary, childhood pictures, recipe books, it's alive everywhere waiting to be pulled onto a page.

Who are your favorite poets?

Jeanann Verlee, Rachel McKibbens, Conor Oberst, Anne Sexton, & little children who say something and don't quite know they're being poets.

Specifications

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THE HONEST HOUSE

In an effort not to crawl back to you,
I crossed the 2-train off my subway map
in blue ink, called it a river, sold our canoe.

Swept the soot from the chimney into a vase,
scattered it all over our favorite spots in Manhattan.
Husband, I pretended they were your ashes.

Spoke your name in past tense and still,
when we found ourselves in the same bar, I phoned a mystic,
told her I was seeing ghosts.

When you confessed your mistress: her red hair,
her scars, how you learned them from up-close, from inside out—
you were no longer the man I married but a dead deer
in the center of our swimming pool.

Our dog has always considered you a burglar, *knew* to spit bark bite
before I did. Once, while you were sleeping I stitched her electric fence
through your skin. I wear her shock collar on nights I go out drinking,
on days I can't find a reason to stay away from you
even though you have left so many behind.

I've watched you with other women;
the way you hand fruit to supermarket clerks,
how your eyebrow lifts for anyone with fake nails.
Your favorite party story is how you once, publically,
pleasured a girl with your band mate's drumstick.
(It's no wonder we don't love the same music).

On our first date I bought a dress off a woman in Brooklyn
so I could stay with you one more day.
Yesterday I threw your clothes from our roof
knowing they would have fallen faster
had there been a body in them.

When I found a picture of your ex-lover's tits
used as a bookmark, I began opening every novel upside-down
like a teenager shakes birthday cards waiting for cash to fall out.
This explains my love for fiction;
 we were never married.
 The dog is not *ours*.

While washing the dishes I watch from the window as the children
we never had drown in the piss-filled pool.
I have never tried to save them.
I invented that pool, this sink.

Did you know that the metronome inside of us quickens when telling a lie?
I want to live in an honest house
where the motion detector is so sharp
it knows when my thoughts leave the room.

I want a clap-on lamp that works as a polygraph:
when you swear you still love me, the lights flicker.

THE RUNAWAYS

We live in a nameless town. Our mailbox is red and rusted shut like a mouth that has not been kissed in fifty years. There is no mailman because there is no mail. These names have been borrowed from books we liked best. Beyond our wraparound porch there is nothing but infinite green. Throughout the day we fill an endless pitcher of half-lemonade (Wendy's favorite) and half iced-tea (mine), and sway in our rocking chairs all afternoon watching the nothing pass by.

After all these years, I'm still not much of a painter but that never stops me from painting. Wendy is not much of a singer but hers is my favorite voice. She picks the guitar as I play the strands of hair, she hums, "*Alice, which note is that?*"

"*A-Flat,*" I answer.

When I paint it is always her dancing in the grass, her white dress moving slowly behind her like a less-skilled waltzer trying to keep time, but she moves so quickly that I can never capture her face. Each canvas arrives as a blur; a layer of milk poured over a water lily. Wendy cries in C-Minor.

We know so much of each other's mouths that we no longer have to speak our fake names. Wendy can sense from the kitchen when my thoughts turn to what those men did, so she meets me by the tulips and seizes the gardening sheers. When she trembles in the bathtub I throw fistfuls of soothing lavender from the bush below her open window and they land on the bath mat. She does not say thank you and she does not need to. Instead, when I am cold under the stars she does not bring a spare afghan but shimmies her tiny body into my sleeping bag and we rest like two caterpillars tucked in the same cocoon.

The aroma of chocolate simmering in a saucepan tells me that Wendy has gone to the place we never speak of. I know its time to begin my part of the ritual. I build a piñata and she stuffs it with her freshly baked sweets as if packing the Trojan Horse with soldiers. She sews up its belly and I hand her the wooden bat but do not let go until her eyes meet mine. When I am certain she understands, I tie the blindfold, spin her around until she is drunk as a husband and let her swing. Striking tentatively at first, Wendy's beating crescendos as she slashes its body open, and we dance in the candy rain.

We have made wind chimes of everything we have left behind: engagement rings, baby's rattles, knocked out teeth delivered by the hands of men who loved us so much we couldn't smile for anyone else. I will never forget the day Wendy came to me with tools in hand and we drilled holes through everything we once owned, strung it all like popcorn garland and hung them throughout the yard. All that we have left has been turned to chimes— whose music plays loudest when the wind blows with fury, who sound most beautiful right after they've been struck.