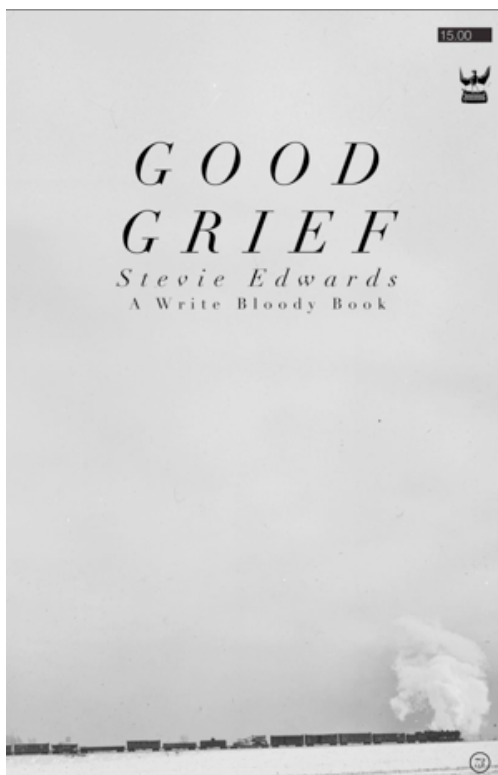


Stevie Edwards

Stevie Edwards lives in central New York, by way of Chicago, by way of Michigan, often exploring the constructs of decaying social in the Rustbelt. She is editor-in-chief/founder of Muzzle and is currently an MFA-poetry candidate at Cornell. Her poetry has appeared in several literary magazines.



About the Book: Good Grief

Elegantly-wrought misadventures as a freshly-graduated, Michigan transplant stumbling over foal legs through Chicago and kneeling down to confront the wreckage of her skinned knees.

Whose writing has influenced you?

- I have probably been most influenced by James Wright, Lynda Hull, and Sylvia Plath. While working on the manuscript for *Good Grief*, I also spent a lot of time reading Erika Meitner, Lyrae Van Clief-Stefanon, Terrance Hayes, and Richard Siken.

2. What keeps you writing?

- I don't know how to process ups and downs of life without writing about it; I've been filling up notebooks with poems (of varying degrees of competency) since I

was about thirteen. I have a fear that my life will someday become so boring that I won't have anything to write about, but thankfully that hasn't happened yet.

3. What do you hope people take away from "book title"?

- *Good Grief* is concerned with reclaiming past "Grief" as "Good." It's concerned with stepping beyond despair and celebrating what it means to be human—to be flawed, but resilient. I hope readers are able to find something tough but filling to sink their teeth into in this stumbling journey toward hopefulness.

4. Which Write Bloody author do you think you beat in sword-fight? a duel? an arm-wrestling match?

- My answer to all three is Benjamin Clark because I think he's too nice to fight back. And if anyone fought back, I think I'd probably lose. And I hate losing.

Specifications

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BISAC: POE005010

WANTED: MUMMY SLEEPING BAG

I paid a woman to make my back more memorable and am left with an itchy swell that won't heal right. My body has spent a month protesting red dye. One friend says hydrocortisone cream and Benadryl. Another, to stop drinking and cut out wheat entirely, maybe survive off of raw foods. I think I would like to stop. To hike into the quiet of cattails and rebuild muscles I've left in an unpaid gym membership. In the past six months I have paid four gynecologists to remind me there's nothing wrong with my body. I think I'd like to stop. I've recently discovered my sense of direction. I can find the quadrants of my apartment from the belly of any hangover. I'd like to prove I can find my way through April. I will set out early, wear less beautiful shoes than usual, pack an orange poncho from the dollar store, and walk until I don't recognize the sounds. I will need something better than a body to keep me warm at night, something weather-proof, snug as a wish for solitude.

WHAT'S NEEDED

A mattress needs to hold a soft body without being jack-hammered into a hardwood floor. A floor needs a body to sweep it for dead skin and ashes. A body needs to breathe smoke, maybe Marlboros or patchouli incense, to remember an uncle finger-picking a 12-string, the strength of GM-line-hands, what can be made of thin steel strings and rosewood. A 12-string needs ears to hear what's being done to it. What's being done to it needs time. Time needs a mattress to collapse, to forget what's been done to it. What's been done to it needs a new dress, one with black lace. Black lace needs a good fuck. A good fuck needs good whiskey to burn away a litany of thou-shalt-nots from a prudent tongue. A tongue needs ears to hear what it's saying. What it's saying needs sunglasses on an early-morning bus ride home. A home needs a body to remember it. To remember needs ritual: the good smoke, breakfast grease, water and painkillers. Pain needs to remember.