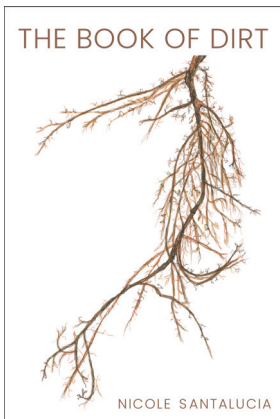


Press Release

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NYQ Books™ Announces the Publication of *The Book of Dirt* by Nicole Santalucia



February 20, 2020 - Beacon, NY - NYQ Books™ is proud to announce the publication of *The Book of Dirt* by Nicole Santalucia. Veering from wry surrealism to ebullient slapstick, the poems in Nicole Santalucia's *The Book of Dirt* chronicle outrage, love, and fear, wed to the terrain and culture of southern-central Pennsylvania. In this collection, lesbians crawl out of the grave that America has been digging since its inception; these are timely poems of resistance, celebrating marriage, sobriety, and survival.

"I've never read a book like *The Book of Dirt*. Stunning in original voice, Nicole Santalucia conjures elemental imagery that runs underground and trespasses all borders. In 'Keystone Ode with Homophobia and Ground Beef in It' Santalucia writes: 'What I am is not on your list of sins... This is how the *guntothetemple* says Hail Mary. / No queers get out of here alive.' These poems give brilliant voice to the lives of women and what it means to survive in the middle of addiction, prison, women-hating, homophobia—in the farm fields of Pennsylvania. From the wreckage rises Santalucia's unflinching and beautiful song. This is a necessary book."

—Jan Beatty, *Jackknife: New and Selected Poems*

"Nicole Santalucia's *The Book of Dirt* is an unsettling journey through a small-town American landscape where gun violence, homophobia, misogyny, and addiction permeate every corner, even though 'there are no corners to turn.' The terrain is littered with 'broken hands and broken heads' and 'soldiers brushing their hair with bones,' but somehow Santalucia's tough, queer, and often grimly humorous voice generates a few sparks of hope that she might find or invent 'a silent place to love,' a place where strength derives not from violence, but from poetry. This isn't a comforting book, but why would it be."

—Mark Bibbins, *13th Balloon*

"'This is the book where a gay girl is in another closet,' Nicole Santalucia writes in her vivacious volume *The Book of Dirt*. It is a very capacious closet, with a wardrobe to enhance a naturally engaging personality with the gift of gab and an attitude of fearless defiance: 'On the way to heaven / I'll probably get pulled over / by the cops. I'll scratch the blue / paint and try to pick the lock.' Nicole's poems are always lively, often funny, not infrequently Pennsylvania-specific, and sometimes all three at once. She has a great time with 'bitch' as a term and a concept—see her 'Bichtown, Pennsylvania'—and wields a sense of satirical humor like that of Nin Andrews. Nicole Santalucia's poems reflect the wit and the will of a soul that has been saved by marriage, sobriety, and the magic of poetry."

—David Lehman, *One Hundred Autobiographies: A Memoir*

Nicole Santalucia is the author of *Because I Did Not Die* (Bordighera Press) and *Spoiled Meat* (Headmistress Press). She is a recipient of the Charlotte Mew Chapbook Prize and the Edna St. Vincent Millay Poetry Prize. Her non-fiction and poetry have appeared in publications such as *The Best American Poetry 2019*, *The Cincinnati Review*, *TINGE*, *Zócalo Public Square*, *The Seventh Wave*, *Gertrude*, *Flyway: Journal of Writing & Environment*, *The Rumpus*, and elsewhere. Santalucia teaches at Shippensburg University in Pennsylvania and has taught poetry workshops in the Cumberland County Prison, Shippensburg Public Library, Boys & Girls Clubs, and nursing homes. She lives in conservative-small-town Pennsylvania with her wife.



photo by Deanna Dorangrichia

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