

Ruin

by Cynthia Cruz

Publication Date: September 15, 2006

Distribution: National

Barcode: Yes

ISBN: 1-882295-58-7

Price: \$14.95

Pages: 72

Available From: Consortium Book Sales & Distribution, Small Press Distribution

Reader, take heed: these are no ordinary poems about childhood and coming of age. Cruz's beautifully understated portrayal of menace and ruin is eloquent in its restraint. A series of secular prayers and elegies, this intense and gritty debut swings between the desire to escape and to transcend as the self transforms in order to exist in an unjust world.

praise for *Ruin*

"This is not a book about peacocks in twilight nor should it be read in the parlor. These spare, intense poems are both terrifying and excruciatingly tender, often both at once. Rarely is mystery so lucid, rarely does poetry rush so directly to the marrow. *Ruin* is a brilliant debut."

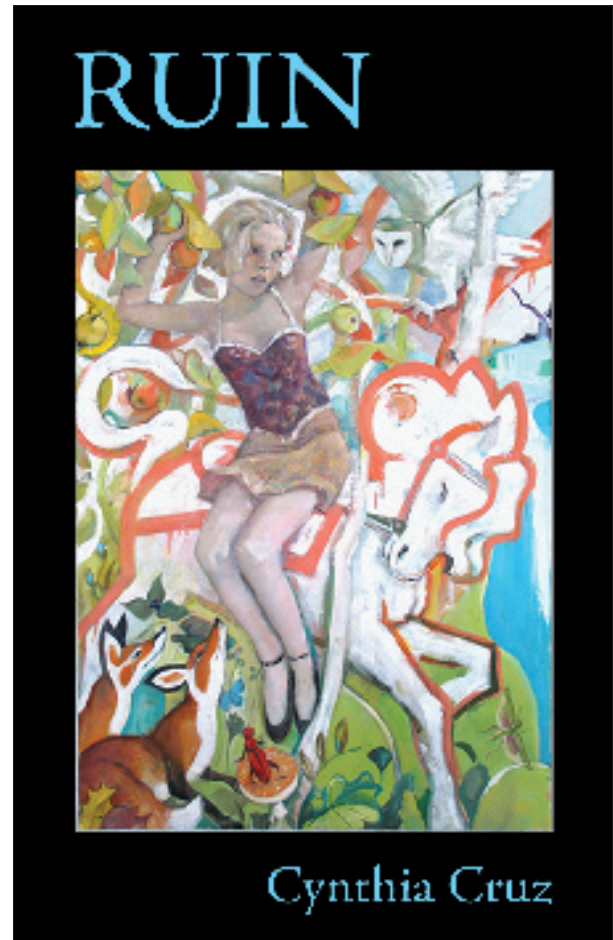
—Thomas Lux

"Cynthia Cruz's passionate, intense poems inhabit a landscape of fates and fatal hungers, nightmares and dangerous desires, in which enchantment and terror are so intimate that they become one. It is our own tawdry, violent, glorious world, but stripped to its essentials, where every object is significant and personal experience is transfigured into archetype."

—Reginald Shepherd

"Cruz's chillingly powerful debut traces the coming-of-age of a girl whose family is haunted by the death of a brother, perhaps by his own hand. In language that is pleadingly clear but also, in the long wake of a shameful family secret, necessarily withholding ... Cruz seeks terms with which to mourn and regain what she has lost."

—*Publishers Weekly*



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January

A California of snow and the surprise
Of illness. I throned myself in the white
Noise of its silence and watched as the world
Fell away. All the silver flickerings of possibility
Going out like the sound of horse hooves
Clicking into the distance. *It is almost
The end.* Anesthesia of medicine and me,
Beneath its warm bell of milk. My girlhood was
Microscopic: a locked window overlooking the
Sea. An atlas of the disaster: an un-lit hall and
A shift in the waves of the field. Blue bedside
Porcelain. Michelle, my little sister, silent as
A weed. I took all the things I loved and
Smashed them one by one.

The Report on Horses II

Then I was back at the old house, my brother
Still alive.

The two of us racing through the yellow sage-
brush,
Dust rising from the earth like mother's

Drunk words, spies in the hallway.
Shadows in the orchard.

Billy's hand in mine, leading me into the wood.
A boy's, beginning, as if for the first time, *Come
on,*

He said, *Let's find something still alive
Left to kill.*



Cynthia Cruz was born in Germany and raised in Northern California. She holds degrees from Mills College (B.A.) and Sarah Lawrence College (M.F.A.). Her poems have appeared in *Paris Review*, *Boston Review*, *GRAND STREET*, *AGNI*, *Chelsea*, *Pleiades*, *the New Orleans Review*, *Bellevue Literary Review*, *Black Warrior Review* and others, and are anthologized in *Isn't it Romantic: 100 Love Poems by Younger Poets* and *The Iowa Anthology of New American Poetries*. She is the recipient of several residencies to Yaddo and the MacDowell Colony. She lives in New York City.

Ruin: publicity and events

Readings:

February 2: Pete's Big Poetry Series at 7 p.m., Pete's Candy Story, 709 Lorimer Street - Williamsburg (Brooklyn, NY)

March 5: Between A & B Poetry Series at 7:30 p.m., The 11th Street Bar, 510 East 11 Street (New York, NY)

April 11-13: Sixth Annual Emerging Writers Festival at 7 p.m., Franklin & Marshall College (Lancaster, PA)

April 26: Teachers and Writers Collaborative, 520 Eighth Ave., Ste. 2020, (New York, NY)