

Spheres of Disturbance
A Novel by Amy Schutzer
ISBN 978-0-98903-611-5
Binding: Tradepaper
Size: 5 x 8; Pages: 280
Price: US \$16.95
Pub Date: April 1, 2014



Amy Schutzer



Arktoi Books
an imprint of Red Hen Press



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Distributed to the book trade
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A haunting, sensual, and brilliantly cunning novel about
America's impossible need to deny death.

Helen is dying. Helen is choosing to die. Over the course of one day in 1985, those who surround her—among them her daughter, an art thief, a high-strung housewife and crochet artist, a lesbian poet, and a pregnant Vietnamese pot-bellied pig—grapple with her impending end. In nine revolving points of view, they resist or accept, impact or impede the trajectories of Helen's death in the world around them, tracing the mark of a culture that tries, desperately and impossibly, to deny death. By turns haunting, sensual, and brilliantly cunning, *Spheres of Disturbance* explores how we can bear to approach, or even choose, our inevitable end.

Praise for *Spheres of Disturbance*

“This book feels like going somewhere, not like reading. Pack your suitcase for traveling. Amy Schutzer has done it again: written a novel so lush with sensual, sensory detail that you enter her world and become characters' kin. It's an old-fashioned experience; I mean focus. *Spheres of Disturbance* is a book the way books were when people got lost in them, lost hours and days in pages. It's beautiful and musical and wise and curious, like your first trip to a library: go.”

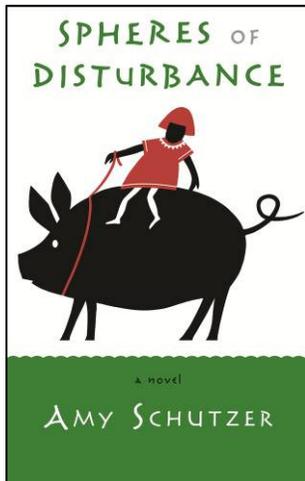
—Carol Guess, author of *Doll Studies: Forensics*

“Amy Schutzer's characters are ordinary people trying to find their way to each other through the complexities of love, birth, and death. She peels away the layers of fear and despair and loneliness to reveal the dark, and sometimes zany, messiness of the human condition, each tangled life colored vividly by history, longing, and failure. Her descents into the long memories of this small group on this single day are dizzyingly steep and wise.”

—Joanna Rose, author of *Little Miss Strange*

Biographical Note

Amy Schutzer's first novel, *Undertow* (Calyx Books, 2000), was a Lambda Literary Award finalist, a Violet Quill Award finalist, and a Today's Librarian “Best of 2000” Award-winner. She is the recipient of an Astraea Foundation Grant for Fiction and a grant from the Barbara Deming Memorial Fund. Finishing Line Press published *Taking the Scarecrows Down*, a chapbook of poetry, in 2011. She has worked as a U.S. Postal Carrier, a cashier, a bookkeeper, a legal assistant, and a Nabisco factory worker. She lives in Portland, Oregon.



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More Praise for *Spheres of Disturbance*

“Amy Schutzer’s fearless novel reminds us that it is possible to deny the reality of death—but at a steep cost: the inability to truly receive and offer love. Her characters—mother and daughter, sisters, lovers and a gravid pig named Charlotta—are squarely rooted in this world, a place of curdled promises, empty lies and history twisted to benefit the teller. The only hope in such a world and—in Schutzer’s brave book—is to face both life and death with open heart and unblinking eyes.”

—Anndee Hochman, author of *Anatomies: A Novella and Stories*

From *Spheres of Disturbance*

The wine is poured. Her Manhattan positioned to the left of her silverware. Will’s usual martini is already half gone. They see her sit down, but go back to their conversation. Will hands her the breadbasket, two slices left under the dark green napkin. Rosie thanks her lucky stars for her ability to enter or leave a room with hardly a ripple to disturb those around her. No one suspects her of anything above a whisper, what Will calls her demure demeanor. Attractive as hell, he has also said, like a Catholic schoolgirl. She lifts the Manhattan to her lips. The perfume from the phone is still on her hand, reminding her of gardenias. She sips her drink and keeps it in the air, close by, and she finishes it quick, orders another, to reduce the day down to a slight inebriation. In that state, her quietness is joined with coquettish geniality. Everyone enjoys her presence; everyone *notices* her presence. As if she’s a grand piano that no one plays, the possibility for exquisite music remains just the same.