

*i built a boat with all the towels in
your closet*

(and will let you drown)

Poetry by Leia Penina Wilson

ISBN 978-1-59709-539-6

Binding: Tradepaper

Size: 7 x 8.5; Pages: 112

Price: US \$18.95

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Leia Penina Wilson



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POETRY

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Winner of the A Room of Her Own Foundation's
To the Lighthouse Poetry Prize, selected by Evie Shockley.

Leia Penina Wilson's *i built a boat with all the towels in your closet (and will let you drown)* is at once a love ballad and a warning. These poems are—at their simplest—about relationships, sex, love, creatures, different kinds (and degrees) of violence, and—at their most complex—about the limits of the imagination, of language, and about the power the imagination has over the body. These poems confront the shifty line between human and animal, and urge the question: at what cost the body. Wilson's animal-human doesn't intend to answer that question; instead, she lunges towards it and tears it up and begins again, and again, and again.

Praise for *i built a boat...*

"I was mesmerized by the wild lyricism, quiet wit, and fearless curiosity of these poems. I feel lucky to have encountered them and am delighted to recognize them with the *To the Lighthouse* Prize."

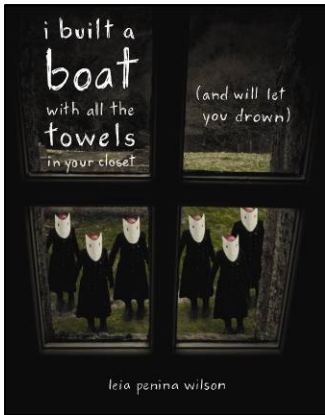
—Evie Shockley

"Leia Wilson thoughtfully assembles a world, then disassembles it, so that we might see its brilliant underside. She illuminates the hidden spaces of memory and the body, uncovers fossils in time and language, looks to the faraway for answers. Stars, seasons, cities, birds, the spoken and unspoken are all stitched and unstitched, hinged and then unhinged. Wilson beautifully takes everything apart and gives us the burning, shimmering cores of things."

—Jenny Bouilly

Biographical Note

Leia Penina Wilson is an MFA candidate in prose at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa. When she's not reading or writing, she spends her time baking tiny cakes and cookies. When she's not baking, she plays Magic: The Gathering and cuddles with her boyfriend on the couch. She is the nonfiction editor for *The Black Warrior Review*. Her work can be found in, or is forthcoming from, *Diagram*, *Alice Blue Review*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *The Chariton Review*, *NAP*, and others. She is originally from St. Joseph, Missouri.



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More Praise for *i built a boat...*

“Perhaps only those poets capable of being riddled by desire can create poems so revelatory of Desire’s Riddle. Leia Penina Wilson’s debut collection offers itself as primer in desire’s difficulties, not a textbook with the answer key in back, but poems that suffer the intricate mystifications of their own inquiry. Wilson shows how wanting works in harm and harmony both, how intimacy creates oddity, how love makes self and other strange at the very point of naked familiarity. Imagination moves through the mind as longing does through the body, insisting the real is a place only to be arrived at, insisting a change must occur, promising the self is never merely the self-same. In nearly Ovidian ways, Wilson charts a nearly unnavigable terrain: how desire not only pushes through the body, but pushes the body into other forms. Here, Imagination is always taking hold, and it takes hold by metamorphosis, by confusing ontology with the inability to decipher the difference between being and pretending-to-be. Wilson seeks her animal self. Part of that animal universe is the vague realm in which pray becomes prey, and the fear of being consumed by what one is most within (the world) finds its only compensation in what that fear also makes available: the recognition that one is here in what is (the world). Such depictions of our damaged dwelling mark for her lucky readers the arrival of a new and needed voice.”

—Dan Beachy-Quick

From *i built a boat...*

she loses her mind but this time it will be different

i’m bored/why do dreams elude: *reading requires a lot from the body*—
where do i store my fear?
some age & mostly used/another train car another train/the impertinence of my
everyday life sometimes amuses sometimes bruises/how difficult it is to be & not
disposable!
help me i can’t find
my brush or i’d brush my hair/i irritate—irritated: i irrationalizes
i shake my head/i’m a dog/horse/bear/i shake again i’m a cat
i refuse to look for my brush/belongs to me so where.
this catastrophe/i touch body/something torches
where have i put the future/who misplaces future—
klutz-y cunt why can’t i remember tomorrow now what happens if i lose that.
i wedge my bellybutton open/i probe/i probe
it’s goeey ooey (yuck) how do i throw up with my hand like this why can’t i throw everything up.
there’s a draft.
i pokepokepokes—there’s a bit of splashing/splotching—i wonder if i’ll catch
cold if i should turn on the heat.