

*Blue Etiquette*

Poetry by Kathleen Driskell  
ISBN 978-1-59709-238-8  
Binding: Tradepaper  
Size: 6 x 9; Pages: 120  
Price: US \$17.95  
**Pub Date: Sept. 17, 2016**



Kathleen Driskell



**For more information contact:**

Alisa Trager  
Marketing Associate  
marketing@redhen.org

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# *Blue Etiquette*

POETRY BY

Kathleen Driskell

Best-selling poet Kathleen Driskell's newest collection, *Blue Etiquette*, is inspired by Emily Post's 1922 edition of *Etiquette* and explores the interactions between the *haves* and *have nots* through poems voiced by *Mrs. Worldly* and the *Between Maid*, narratives focusing on blue-collar Americans, and lyrics drifting through the *blue* etiquette of mourning beloveds.

When Kathleen Driskell pulled an old edition of Emily Post's *Etiquette* from the used bookstore shelf and blew dust off the blue linen cover, she instantly found herself and her family within those pages—not as the Worldlys, Oldlineages, or the Gildings (archetypes Post created to demonstrate how to properly manage a grand house full of servants), but as the housemaids, cooks, and useful men working for those very rich. The noted poet—whose collection *Seed Across Snow* was twice listed as a national bestseller by the Poetry Foundation—explores class, the workplace, and those tense interactions between the *haves* and the *have nots* in her new collection. As America watches its middle-class quickly decline, *Blue Etiquette* rings with relevance.

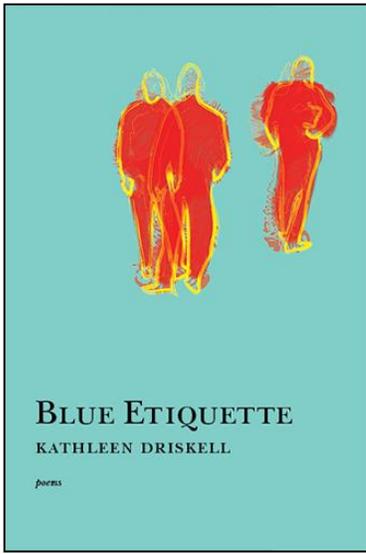
### **Praise for *Blue Etiquette***

“In *Blue Etiquette* Kathleen Driskell has drawn back the curtain on the gracious, if not always the good, members of polite society and shown us the hazards to those in service who do not attend carefully to protocol. From Emily Post's 1922 *Etiquette*, she has recovered rules for survival in a world where distinctions between the classes are sharp as the razor's edge of a bone-handled fruit knife, polished to gleaming for 'its own strange work.' Violating the commandment that 'what we see, we rarely ever say,' she bears witness to those whose job it is to keep silent—country club groundskeeper, head waiter's assistant, nursing home aid, laundry woman. In narratives of service and suffering, Driskell gives us poetry that sings like silver, bright and dark in its rich patina.”

—Lynnell Edwards, author of *Covet*

### **Biographical Note**

Kathleen Driskell is the author of three previously published poetry collections including *Next Door to the Dead* and *Seed Across Snow*, listed as a national bestseller by the Poetry Foundation, and she is professor of creative writing and a director of Spalding University's low-residency MFA program in Louisville, Kentucky.



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**From *Blue Etiquette***

**EVOLUTION**

Aspiring to college,  
I set out  
to evolve more quickly  
than the finches  
and tortoises  
I'd read about, and more  
quickly than the coal-miners  
and factory workers  
I'd come from and  
after just one summer  
in loose brown polyester,  
and awful white shoes,  
the required waitress uniform  
at the Country Club,  
where I set limp Dover Sole  
in front of lunching ladies  
I moved into the hot tuxedo  
I wore at a 5-star, where tableside  
I often cracked a coddled egg  
and divided the bulb of yolk yellow  
from the sticky white viscosity  
and addressed the anchovy,  
until its hairy bones were mashed,  
and then the lemon squeeze,  
and the tabasco, eight quick drops.  
Sitting next to the older men  
in expensive suits and shoes,  
young beautiful women  
in narrow sequined dresses  
tried to ignore me as I tossed  
their garlicky salad,  
and deftly used my Russian  
service. With each of them,  
I was just as haughty, plating  
their leafy vinegary greens  
with disdain, because like Darwin,  
I hadn't seen, at first, that these  
women were determined to evolve, too.