



# Flutter, Kick

POETRY BY

Anna V. Q. Ross

Wary and watchful, never resigned, *Flutter, Kick* maps the spaces for tenderness we carve in a dangerous world.

Anna V. Q. Ross plumbs motherhood, migration, childhood, and the cycles of violence and renewal that recur in each. These are poems of math homework and police sirens, where a fox pops out of a fairy tale to dig up the back yard, NPR News spirals the evening carpool into memories of girlhood and trauma, and a city gas leak conjures xenophobic backlash against refugees. In poems of reclamation and warning, *Flutter, Kick* brings us to the center of our world—a place where “in those days, we were fast and best, but didn’t know it”—with a compassion learned of anger, memory, and joy.

## ADVANCE PRAISE

“Anna V. Q. Ross’s finely wrought poems reveal a world where nurture is stacked against disaster, where nothing—not the children in their ‘flocks of black and yellow / school buses,’ not the fire-prone ‘lodgepole pines that have perfected leaving’—is spared a keen awareness of how an ending could come at any time. With acute attention and insight, Ross writes of stewardship and sustenance, of violence and vulnerability; her poems are unafraid to ask what can’t be answered and unapologetic in their insistence that there is no space for the tender that doesn’t also include the tough.”

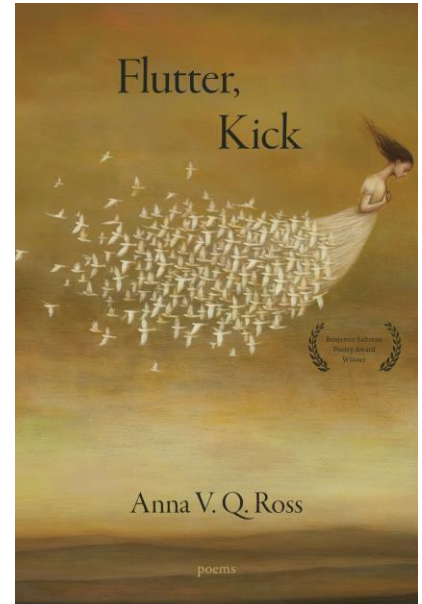
—Natalie Shapero, author of *Popular Longing*

“In this extraordinarily tender, brutally honest collection, Anna V. Q. Ross’s *Flutter, Kick* explores the fullness of life while harnessing poetry’s ability to examine the past. This feminist voice not only marvels and reveals, but also hums, channels, witnesses, and affirms. Ross navigates the waters of motherhood and memory, tempers regret with resoluteness, and does so with soft rhymes and language that lifts off the page. She observes small moments to discover big truths. *Flutter, Kick* is a fine-spun, insightful work of art that is eloquent, revelatory, and self-aware.”

—January Gill O’Neil, author of *Rewilding*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anna V. Q. Ross’s previous poetry collections are *If a Storm* and the chapbooks *Figuring* and *Hawk Weather*. Her awards include the Robert Dana-Anhinga Prize for Poetry, the New Women’s Voices Prize in Poetry, and fellowships from the Fulbright Foundation, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, Sewanee Writers’ Conference, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and Vermont Studio Center. Her work appears in *Harvard Review*, *The Nation*, *The Paris Review*, *The Southern Review*, and other journals. Anna is the poetry editor for *Salamander* and teaches at Emerson College. She lives with her family in Dorchester, MA, where she runs the performance series Unearthed Song & Poetry and raises chickens.



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**MORE PRAISE FOR *FLUTTER, KICK***

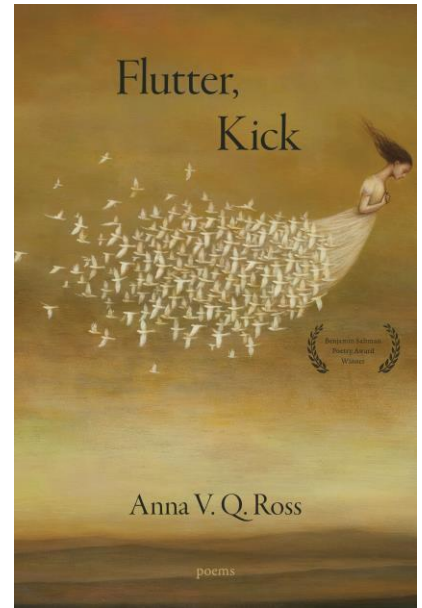
“In *Flutter, Kick*, Ross focuses her sharp description, taut lyricism, and vigilant gaze at the world around her with a kind of double-attentiveness, attuned to the beauties and pleasures of everyday life, nature, and motherhood while remaining acutely aware that danger, tragedy, or loss can intrude at any moment—‘not if, but when.’ ‘Somewhere nearby / the sharp-shinned hawk is circling,’ some peril is rising up in the neighborhood or within the self, or some atrocity is being committed on the other side of the world, where ‘someone else’ is suffering. This dark knowledge is both a burden and—especially after the speaker learns to ‘give up fear’—a blessing that deepens the many moments of joy and human connection that this book offers.”

—**Jeffrey Harrison**, author of *Between Lakes* and 2020 Benjamin Saltman Poetry Award Judge

**FROM *FLUTTER, KICK***

HOUSE

I come from there, with lavender  
growing small against the bricks.  
I come from there, with a little white jug  
and a tea towel on the tray.  
I come from there, with a worn stair rug  
and a wooden banister  
leading up two floors, past bedroom doors  
to a room at the very top  
with a window looking down to a square  
of grass and a garden wall  
where roses grow with tangled canes  
rooting between the cracks.  
I come from where, I once was told,  
someone attached a lock  
on her bedroom door and didn’t say why  
or who she feared  
might open it through all the years  
she stayed in the house with lavender  
grown small against the bricks  
and the roses rooting through the wall  
and the tea towel on the tray  
and the little white jug and worn stair rug  
she descended the day she went away.  
I come from there.



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