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instead, it is dark

POETRY BY
Cynthia Hogue

Cynthia Hogue's *instead, it is dark* comprises a chorale of voices from civilian life during violence then and now.

Following her husband's massive heart attack, Cynthia Hogue began writing poems based on dreams and memories that he, born during WWII in occupied France, had as a child growing up in a time of vast postwar food shortages. Hogue embarked on a quest to discover if there were more such memories in her extended family in France. When asked, family members told her never-before-shared tales of parents who were POWs, collaborators, Resistance fighters, and one most vulnerable—of a hidden child. Hogue spent years researching the lives of civilians during war, work crystallized in her tenth collection of poetry, *instead, it is dark*. The personal is alchemized as Hogue weaves history and present day in poems that explore how *there, here*, an individual voice in the stark language of lyric poetry, speaks a complex truth and casts a laser light on violence, resilience, survival, and—the heart of this collection—love.

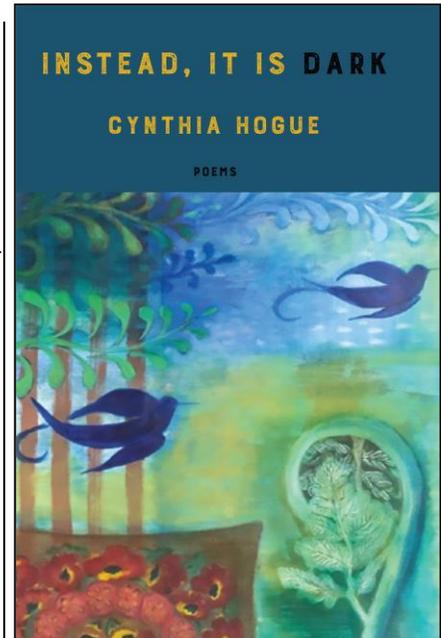
ADVANCE PRAISE

How do other people's memories come to live in our bodies, how do they travel by means of language, from one human body to another, across time and miles, painful miles? I ask this question out of sorrow, yes, but also in wonder, upon reading Cynthia Hogue's beautiful, transformative *instead, it is dark*, a book not of tales or dreams or historical accounts but of memories that survive us, that have already survived us, as they've entered the lyric. Open this book on almost any page and you will see not just World War I history, or its aftermath, but also what such histories do to our minds. You will hear not just the hum of time, but its stranger mysteries. Yes, there is a child forgotten upstairs in the burning building, yes, there is a dream of an underground town, yes, there is a man who survives a heart attack in the twenty-first century and right there in the emergency room asks his wife, the poet, to write down his dreams of what happened. In this world of tragedy, it is tenderness that gives us a chance, it is a whisper that surprises and awakes. Which is to say: Cynthia Hogue has written a beautiful spell of a book, one that investigates the real, yes, but also opens the door into the mystery of time.

—Ilya Kaminsky, author of *Dancing in Odessa and Deaf Republic*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cynthia Hogue is an award-winning poet, critic, and translator now living in Tucson. Described in the *New York Times* as having, "a knack for intensity," Cynthia Hogue has published twenty books of poetry, translations, and criticism, including such volumes from Red Hen Press as *Revenance* and *In June the Labyrinth*. She is co-author of *When the Water Came: Evacuees of Hurricane Katrina* (interview-poems with photographs by Rebecca Ross), named a Notable Book by *Poetry International*. *Revenance* was listed as one of the 2014 "Standout" books by the Academy of American Poets. Hogue's honors include two NEA Fellowships and the H.D.Fellowship at Yale. She lives in Tucson.



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MORE PRAISE FOR *instead, it is dark*

instead, it is dark opens with voices that bear witness to traumas suffered in occupied France during World War I. In poems utterly specific yet free of the constrictions of monologue, Hogue pierces to the bone of experience. Her lyric mastery, coupled with deep empathy and insight, transforms violence into song, compelling and fundamental. Her forms and cadences, including elliptical leaps and silences, alter in response to the pressures of intense feeling. The range of these poems reminds us that war's consequences don't end with peace treaties, and that the catastrophe of violence alive in our time includes the silencing and degradation of the powerless. Dark indeed—at times ferocious—yet a radiance emanates from these poems that I find unforgettable. This is an extraordinary and important book.

—Joan Larkin, author of *My Body: New and Selected Poems*

FROM *instead, it is dark*

instead, it is dark

I woke to the dead
and was among them.

how this happened,
who did this to us

unaccountably
hatred glosses

and evidence belies.
ourselves but ourselves.

I'd gone to the corner
when the bakery opened,

mouthed regards
to a rare sun, and then suddenly—

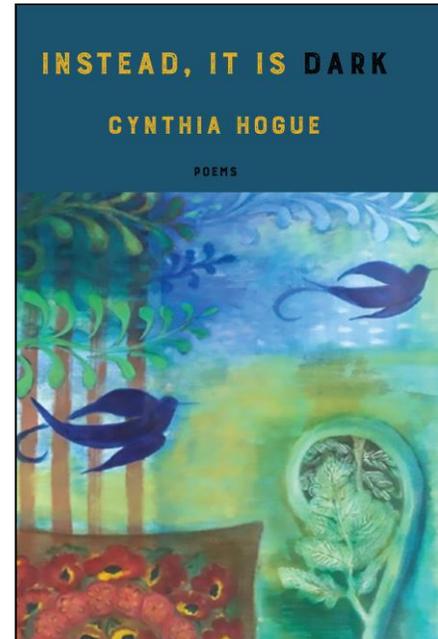
though not—I remember
nothing else.

I feel around me now
and everyone's near

who waited for bread
or God one morning.

it's true I thought at the last
I heard something but didn't think

to turn, nor catch sight of,
nor glean time to.



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