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Red Hen Press

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Floriography Child

POETRY BY

Lisa C. Krueger

Written in memoir form through the language of flowers, this book of poems examines a daughter's chronic illness in order to consider the vastness of human connection.

Floriography Child is a book about salvation: what gives people strength in the face of adversity, not just to endure, but to move through and beyond our myriad human sufferings. Through poems, micro-essays, and visual art, *Floriography Child* addresses fundamental questions about purpose, connection, and resilience. Written in memoir form, this book examines the mother-daughter relationship and its intimacies in the context of a daughter's developing chronic illness. How to bear another's suffering—how to find sustenance in a world fraught with uncertainty and pain—is addressed through the language of flowers and the natural world. Ultimately, this book asks us to consider how each of us, whatever our path, is connected.

ADVANCE PRAISE

“Poems in this collection appear as psalms or elegies for an ill daughter, often rendered through a mother's obsession with flowers. The poems are like small impressionist paintings by a poet with a controlled hand and eye and strong voice.”

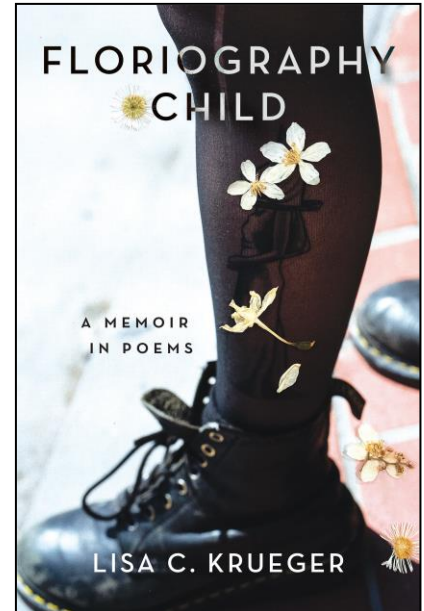
—**Dorianne Laux**, author of *Only As the Day is Long* and *The Book of Men*

“In stark movements of mind, the touching and keen language here radiates a mother's verdant love for a daughter beset with chronic illness. That love is aching and palpable, full of strength and resolve. And thus, the poems in *Floriography* echo in layers and in Krueger's profound music, a spirit of wisdom I find rich, intoxicating, and integral.”

—**Major Jackson**, author of *The Absurd Man* and *Leaving Saturn*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lisa C. Krueger, PhD, MFA, is a clinical psychologist. Her poems have appeared in various journals, including *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *Ploughshares*, and *Prairie Schooner*, and with Red Hen Press. She has published articles on the creative process and parallels between poetry and therapy, as well as interactive journals for girls and women. Recent poems have been included as finalists for the Catamaran Poetry Prize, the Red Wheelbarrow Poetry Prize, and the Pushcart Prize. She maintains a therapy practice with subspecialties in health psychology, women's issues, and writing therapy. She lives in Pasadena, CA. *Floriography Child* is her fifth book of poetry.



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FROM FLORIOGRAPHY CHILD

Trees Die Slowly to Survive

We swim in late light
near a line of redwood
spindled from drought;

my daughter's body
glides through water,
with ease, as though

all of her
was meant for this,
this deep water,

this almost dark,
her head lifted
above blackness,

the wake of her
rocking against me;
at ease; then evening's

west wind wandering
in the redwoods
that shift against

one another, rattling
like lost children
calling out.

The redwoods won't survive.
No evening mist arrives
to veil their limbs, each well

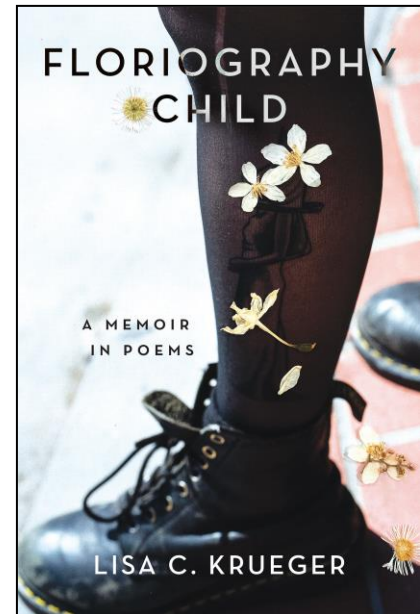
has gone dry. My daughter
photographs the grove's decline,
brings her lens up close,

so intimate with bark
that death becomes erotic, rivering
in fibrous plaques of disease

that embrace like bodies
desperate for love. Image to image,
I can't see change;

only the last photograph
holds out its darkened shield.
Yet here are the trees,

standing near; my daughter,
a woman alone in illness,
moves to mirror me.



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