



ELASTIC SHRIEK MACHINE (black & white)

Meg Cowen

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Meg Cowen's book *Elastic Shriek Machine* was a finalist for the 2015 Knut House Poetry Prize and features her own original artwork. Meg Cowen is the author of two previous chapbooks and her work has appeared in *DIAGRAM*, *Verse Daily*, *PANK* and other magazines. As a founding editor of Pith and Kin Press, she curates experimental poetry and prose with a focus on advocating poetic and genre-blending projects by writers with an interdisciplinary arts background. About *Elastic Shriek Machine*, author Jennifer Pilch writes: "Meg Cowen takes on the grotesque exaggerations of mundane experience. With an artist's sensibility, Cowen transforms disease, madness, family tragedies, and botched experiments into baroque, kaleidoscopic scenes. She wonders what might solve life's hardships as they contract, expand, and warp in the mysteries of dark matter."

About the Author

Meg Cowen is an artist and writer from New Hampshire. She is the author of two previous chapbooks and her work has appeared in *DIAGRAM*, *Verse Daily*, *PANK* and other magazines. As a founding editor of Pith and Kin Press, she curates experimental poetry and prose with a focus on advocating poetic and genre-blending projects by writers with an interdisciplinary arts background. *Elastic Shriek Machine* is her first full-length collection of poetry.

Advance Praise for *Elastic Shriek Machine*

"In *Elastic Shriek Machine*, Meg Cowen takes on the grotesque exaggerations of mundane experience. With an artist's sensibility, Cowen transforms disease, madness, family tragedies, and botched experiments into baroque, kaleidoscopic scenes. She wonders what might solve life's hardships as they contract, expand, and warp in the mysteries of dark matter."

— Jennifer Pilch, author of *Deus Ex Machina*

In her debut collection of poems, *Elastic Shriek Machine*, Meg Cowen writes: "I wonder what fear will do to us next / how it's managed to pull the wild out of us" and the wild, pulled from the poet by force or by charm or by grief, resonates in these poems. Cowen's lines witness the wild centers of things, "the herringbone pattern / in the smallest set of ribs," and the sickness that closes the gap between human and environment when we are exposed to the elements — weather, lovers, family. Humans are penetrable, vulnerable in these poems; the line between human and nature is a thin one, their differences cut clear only when illuminated by machine: "the best / way / to flick webs off / your body is / to use a torch." Here, the collection catches fire. What follows is densely narrative, a catalogue of a body deeply and lovingly inhabited by its "fermented narrator," even when torn, always attuned to the music of bodies: "I do not remember the last good pop song I heard / in my mother's car, but I do know that an open sandbox / poured from her mouth when she tried to sing it." These poems pour forth like a desert whose dunes repeat, shift, and change continuously — voluptuous and present in the world.

— Jasmine Dreame Wagner, author of *Rings*

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