



Wild Kingdom

Poems

JEHANNE DUBROW

Wild Kingdom explores the world of academia, examining this strange landscape populated by faculty, administrators, and students. Using what she calls “received academic forms,” Jehanne Dubrow crafts poems that recall the language of academic documents such as syllabi, grading rubrics, and departmental minutes. “Honor Board Hearing,” a series of prose poems, depicts challenges frequently faced by undergraduates, offering fictionalized accounts of cases involving plagiarism, theft, sexual assault, and substance abuse.

As a rejoinder to the famous dictum that “academic politics is the most vicious and bitter form of politics, because the stakes are so low,” Dubrow maintains that, given the current moment, the stakes could not be higher. Even as it acknowledges the cruelty that exists within the academy, *Wild Kingdom* asks how scholars and educators can work to ensure that institutions of higher learning continue to nurture students and remain places of rigorous critical thinking.

JEHANNE DUBROW is the author of eight collections of poems, including *Dots & Dashes*, *Red Army Red*, and *Stateside*. Her work has appeared in *Poetry*, *New England Review*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, and many other publications. She is professor of creative writing at the University of North Texas.

PRAISE FOR *WILD KINGDOM*:

“In the isolated wilderness of ‘the Academy,’ colleagues are pitted against one another, men squawk over women in meetings, and people wield their privilege like knives. Jehanne Dubrow’s speaker in *Wild Kingdom* says, ‘Once I saw myself in anyone / who stood at the center of a storm.’ Though it’s hard ‘explaining cruelty’ because ‘only / some have felt the coldness of its cut,’ this truly astonishing book manages to carve out—with craft and wit and, most daringly, vulnerability—not just the view of a poisoned landscape of learning, but a map of how the self at the center can escape an untamed place where there are ‘birds of prey and birds / that are preyed upon.’ Inside the strangle of broken bureaucracy are moments of life-saving reflection: ‘I had to believe little cups of gold, / the sharp, green stems of crocuses / were poking through . . .’ This is the book of a person who learned the hard way to survive the brutalities of this kingdom, but who was not hardened by the learning.”
—Aaron Smith, author of *The Book of Daniel and Primer*

“In these razor-sharp satires, odes, and laments, Jehanne Dubrow reminds us that the ivory tower of academia is ‘the real world’ if ever there was one: a place of perilous human interactions, fraught with longing, and ambition, and what she calls ‘the magnificent gravity of regret.’ In lyrics laced with the parlance of the place—from Strategic Plans to Course Evaluations to a final Resignation Letter—*Wild Kingdom* rewilds academia for those who thought they knew it, and holds a mirror up to campus life in all its tragedy, and poignancy, and folly.”
—Patrick Phillips, author of *Elegy for a Broken Machine and Blood at the Root: A Racial Cleansing in America*



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Poetry



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