



Our Lady of Bewilderment

Poems

ALISON PELEGRIN

“In clear-eyed, gutting, and sometimes sharply funny poems, Pelegrin explores seismic shifts and disasters both ecological and personal, reckoning with adolescence, climate change, floodwaters, the trials of adulthood, and the complex landscape of home. . . . *Our Lady of Bewilderment* is a hurricane of a book.”—Catherine Pierce

“An exploration of both girlhood and motherhood—and life in a female body—these poems weave family histories with the collective histories of the Gulf South. . . . Pelegrin’s voice is vivid and defiant, and her use of form absolutely masterful. This is an astonishing book.”—Nicole Cooley

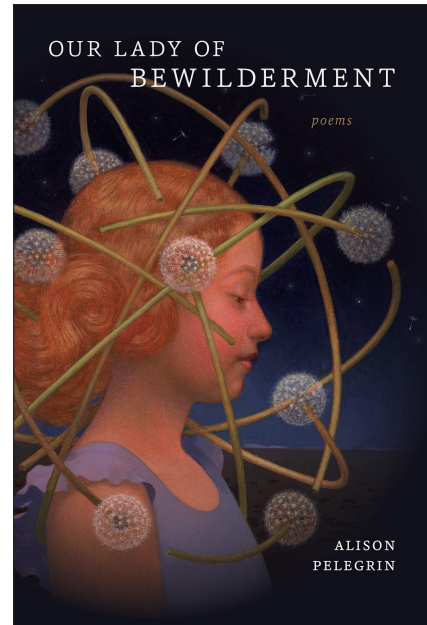
“I have long been Pelegrin’s biggest fan for the little mean streak (delicious as Dorothy Parker’s or Plath’s) that never got socialized out of her, for the way she gets the untouristy side and unromantic details of Louisiana exactly right, for her ability to make me laugh and break my heart in the same poem. But this is her best book yet.”—Julie Kane

Whether by way of visitations from secular saints, hauntings from childhood, or back talk from “indelicate broads,” a complicated world speaks to and through Alison Pelegrin in *Our Lady of Bewilderment*. An unusual blend of mystic-comedian, Pelegrin explores physical and psychic beauty and terror without losing sight of wonder. Drawing on the aid of beings real and imaginary, *Our Lady of Bewilderment* offers humorous, honest, and intimate poems contemplating life’s traumas and joys, filtered through the religion-infused secular traditions of Louisiana.

ALISON PELEGRIN is the author of four poetry collections, including *Waterlines*. She has received a fellowship from the National Endowment of the Arts as well as an ATLAS grant from the Louisiana Board of Regents. She is writer-in-residence at Southeastern Louisiana University.

Even in Gretna, Hearing the Cashier Talk, I Long for Gretna

Coasting into my old world to help
mom pack up the house she can't sell
for nothing rimmed as it is with trash
and canals threatening to overflow
I get a taste for the red drink
of my youth and when the cashier
at the gas station lets slip the drawl
of my people most of them scattered
elsewhere or to the grave I could sob
peacock talk purposely showy and slow
any time I'd hit the twang mom got angry
because I was *letting my Gretna show*
she threatened a face slap or taste of soap
and I circled on a red bike just out of reach



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