

## drizzle review

# Review: Nature Store by Mary Kasimor

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*Nature Store* by Mary Kasimor (dancing girl press & studio, 2017)

Reviewed by Ann Tweedy (<https://readdrizzle.blog/our-reviewers/>)

Mary Kasimor is an experimental poet who has published numerous books and chapbooks and who, more recently, has begun to establish herself as a visual artist. Now retired, she served for many years as a professor at a technical college in Minnesota. She describes her art as being like her poetry in that it is “very experimental and abstract.” She uses thread, ink and paint (watercolor or acrylic). Her paintings, reminiscent of Rothko’s early work, have soft shapes connected by wavy lines which are set against a colorful background. Her poetry is imagistic and non-linear and often explores gender and other social justice issues, along with her own experiences.

*Nature Store* is a moving and expertly crafted chapbook that explores gender in American society from the perspective of a cis-gender woman. These language poems are difficult yet playful, and they wrestle with relationships, politics, sexual violence, and even religion. Almost all of the

poems could be read in multiple ways. One of my favorites is the poem “saint drama,” which evokes a hospital room—perhaps in a psychiatric hospital—though it also suggests elements of interpersonal relationships. With references to such gendered societal concepts as “the logical balance/ of women,” “saint drama” depicts “random patterns of fear cut into the brain,” tells us of “the sun’s resurrection/ . . . obsessed with versions of purity.” (p.8) The poem ends with a description of the poetry arising from isolation as both a “gem” and evidence of the persona’s “diseased mind.” (p.8)

The next poem, “2.16 acres,” is an arresting poem about a crime scene. Sometimes in this poem it seems as if the persona is an observer, and at other times the perspective shifts and the persona becomes a murder victim speaking. (p.9) “2.16 acres” is home to images, such as the collision of “birds wind oxygen,” as well as startling truths that feel reminiscent of Sylvia Plath, like “. . . the true self/ fingers harm/ polishing the murders until they are beautiful.” (p.9) One of the most interesting aspects of the poem is the way that Kasimor describes different elements of the natural world as participants in the events surrounding the murders. For instance, we are told that “the ocean absorbs/ drownings touch the bodies as conceived/ from salted corners.” (p.9) And, as the poem nears its end, we are left with the curious and disturbing image of “ants listen[ing] to empty plastic” (p.10), which suggests the futility of human activity and reminds us of the artificial aspects of our world.

Other poems are more lighthearted. “earth stories” for instance tells us that the Buddha “. . . isn’t a thought/ he must breathe a pattern/ repetition in itself/ one / one one.” (p.17)

Another poem, “zoloft algorithms” pulls the reader along on a journey into the disorientation that can be caused by antidepressants. Here, in the “burying of identity,” we find “heirloom apologists” and a world in which “no one [is] forgiven/ wild flowers or accidental life.” (p.16) “zoloft algorithms” is also an excellent example of Kasimor’s characteristic use of space and word breaks to layer meanings. Here “no one” doubles as “noo” and “no one,” and “accident” stands by itself as something not to be forgiven as well as comprising part of “accidental life.” (p. 16) Kasimor’s powerful voice and her surprising descriptions unite all of these poems.

This chapbook is not for the faint of heart, but deep thinkers and lovers of language will be rewarded by this journey into Kasimor’s unique use of language, her surprising juxtapositions, and her wise societal critiques.

**Buy this book: [dancing girl press \(https://dulcetshop.myshopify.com/products/nature-store-mary-kasimor\)](https://dulcetshop.myshopify.com/products/nature-store-mary-kasimor)**

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