



Midnight in the Guest Room

Jan Bailey

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In *Midnight in the Guest Room* Jan Bailey locates the "bliss of the routine" experiences in women's lives—childhood, love, marriage, sexuality, birth, child rearing, aging—and transforms them into moments of transcendent power and beauty. With uncommon wit and sensitivity she offers us poems about the pleasures of a woman's soft and unstylish belly; the fierceness of mother love; the desolation of a miscarriage; the hilarious illusion of sexual healing; the unexpected eroticism of breast feeding:

from "Mornings in the Blue House":

She draped her newborn like a sheaf of peonies
across her lap, peeled back the blanket from
the puffball face, then parted her robe, pinched
her nipple and settled in her daughter there
and something sweetly sexual rose between
them—the pressure, the release—and she fell
fully into love, holding nothing back
as with a man, whose wounding begins
as soon as he cries Baby and rolls over.

Rooted in the landscape of the South, celebrating the private treasures to be found in the everyday world, her poems speak to us all of the joys and the losses of the seasons of our lives.

Jan Bailey grew up in the foothills of South Carolina. The author of two highly regarded volumes of poetry, *Paper Clothes* and *Heart of the Other*, she is a recipient of the South Carolina Arts Commission Fellowship in Poetry. She holds an MFA from Vermont College and divides her time between South Carolina, where she is chair of the creative writing department of the Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities, and Monhegan Island, Maine, where she teaches poetry workshops and operates the island general store.

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