



Easy Math (Kathryn A. Morton Prize in Poetry)

Lauren Shapiro

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Selected by Marie Howe for the 2011 Kathryn A. Morton Prize, *Easy Math* is anxious and exuberant both. Lauren Shapiro's poems are Aesop stood on end, wry fables that defy our instinct to find a moral to the story. Instead, she offers us a gimlet eye to the disappointments of the world, tall tale-telling by turns rickety, defiant, and brave. "There are an infinite number of ways to torture the soul with hopefulness" Shapiro says, so we settle for ways to survive—crooked grins, twisted logic, and equations of jello shots, amusement parks, and post-it notes that never add up. "Everyone has something to say / about love and impermanence and waste." She says it better than most.

"Shapiro specializes in snappy, poignant retorts to the problems of pop culture. Joan Rivers, Lindsay Lohan, and even the wily *Jersey Shore* crew inhabit her crackling new volume of poems, winner of the Kathryn A. Morton Prize in Poetry.... Shapiro guides readers into uncomfortable but evocative settings, from a surreal ESL classroom and plague-ridden Marseilles to a hotel workout room. Imagination does not just take flight here; it rides the airport shuttle bus and connects travelers from different continents."

--Booklist

"Lauren Shapiro can downshift from the sublime to the profane and back again in less than five seconds. Energy and joy create these metaphors, and if they are in discourse with postmodern malaise, they almost win the argument."

—Marie Howe



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