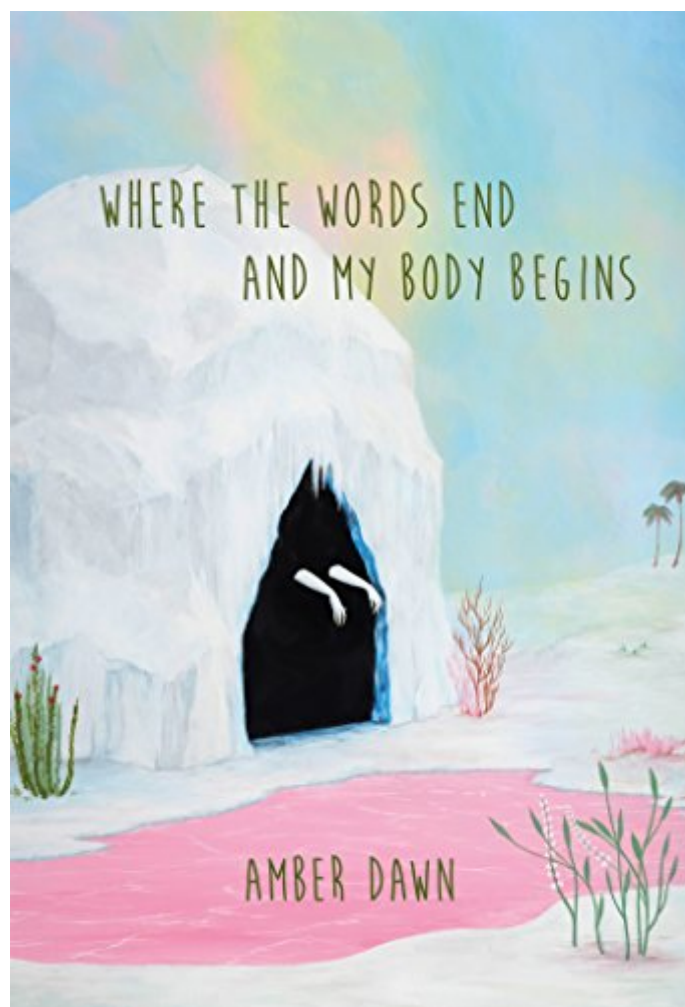


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Where The Words End And My Body Begins



Synopsis

Award-winning novelist and memoirist Amber Dawn reveals a gutsy lyrical sensibility in her debut poetry collection: a collection of glosa poems written as an homage to and an interaction with queer poets such as Gertrude Stein, Christina Rossetti, and Adrienne Rich. By doing so, Dawn delves deeper into the themes of trauma, memory, and unblushing sexuality that define her work. Amber Dawn is the author of the Lambda Award-winning novel *Sub Rosa* and the memoir *How Poetry Saved My Life* (winner of the Vancouver Book Award). Her other awards include the Writers' Trust of Canada Dayne Ogilvie Prize.

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Customer Reviews

Amber Dawn wanted to gloss. That is, she wanted to write poems called glosas: four ten-line stanzas in which the last line of each stanza "derived sequentially from a quatrain of another poet." It gave Dawn an opportunity to interact with her peers and the poets who influenced her. She connected with the "survivorship verse" of Lucille Clifton and other legendary poets as well as contemporary poets who are among her friends and "part of larger queer literary communities." "Story Book," begins with four lines from Clifton's "won't you celebrate with me."

Dawn's response begins: "Be here with me only if you can." Perhaps that first line could apply to every poem in the book. In this particular poem she continues: "The 1900 block of Pandora / is where I was raped by three men/ You don't have to do anything but listen." She strays from the strict glosa form, as she says "when breaking the rules served me. Glossing allowed me to immerse myself in a kind of living appreciation for poetry and for the personal memories and values that shape my writing." If we listen as the poet suggests in "Story Book" and act as witness, we also can celebrate the poet's "return to Pandora" where "Chosen family in leather welcome one another." Dawn's words meet with Clifton's in the last line: "come celebrate." "A tough life needs a tough language" and that is what poetry is," Jeanette Winterson wrote in her memoir, *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal*. She said literature "isn't a hiding place. It is a finding place."

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