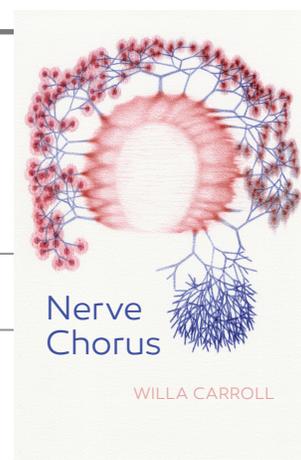


NERVE CHORUS

BY WILLA CARROLL

ISBN 978-1-944585-24-2 | \$17 | 80 pages



These nimble poems grapple with what it means to belong to a body, a family, a country. With rigor and dark wit, Carroll conjures the exhilarating terror of moving through one's life with nothing but "flesh holding / back disaster."

— Tracy K. Smith

Here is a miraculous poet made of music. She writes what the world needs to hear—what I needed to hear. She takes on our greatest mysteries and inheritances: love, desire, loss, family, activism, art, justice—and every poem changes the air we breathe. This debut reworks the mind as it breaks the heart with its beauty. To be fully alive, in the face of devastation, grief, and longing, a poet must make a song that could be eternal. Willa Carroll is fearless in the face of that challenge. Her music deserves to be sung everywhere—in the church of our earth, in the peace between lovers, in the halls of our learning, in the quiet places of illness and death and mourning. Hers is an art of perpetuity, and she is a genius whose words I hold my breath to hear more clearly.

—Brenda Shaughnessy

This masterful debut spotlights body, self, family, and society while interrogating brutal inequalities. The visceral poems take on gender, class, race, war, gun violence, and capitalistic greed. Facing a young girl's violation and a father's fatal asbestos exposure, the poems move between loss and resilience with urgency and invention. A chorus of artists and pop-culture heroes appear in unexpected cameos as *nerve* signifies the crackling mind, the high-heat metaphor, and a bright ambush of language. The radiance of life and death flashes through these poems by a remarkable new poet.

"Willa Carroll is fearless..."

Timothy Liu observes, "Half public, half private, this book maps the body in lingual movements that accrete and erupt out of stasis, striking choral resonances, transmuting personal/local histories, straddling the elegant and the repugnant. Here is a force to be reckoned with, a memorable debut."



THE WORD WORKS

P.O. BOX 42164

WASHINGTON, DC 20015

Nerve Chorus is intended for a general adult readership. Distribution is through Small Press Distribution, Ingram, and www.wordworksbooks.org.

The author is available for readings, interview, and campus visits. For further information, contact Nancy White, President, The Word Works, at editor@wordworksbooks.org.

“Willa Carroll was an experimental dancer and actor before turning to poetry, and many of the poems of her remarkable debut collection, [*Nerve Chorus*](#), revolve around performance and the body. Her work reminds us that much of our experience transcends our verbal abilities. With personal subject matter and elegant, yet accessible, philosophical explorations, Carroll succeeds in maintaining a strong tonal unity and distinct lyricism. Like experimental dance, these poems invite a visceral experience. Meanwhile, they should be admired for their lyrical flexibility, the exactness of their imagery, their life-affirming quality, as well as their intellectual engagement.”

—Excerpt from review by ANDREA JURJEVIĆ in *The Common*



Willa Carroll's poems have appeared in *AGNI*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Quarterly Journal*, *Tin House*, and elsewhere. She was the winner of *Narrative's* Third Annual Poetry Contest and *Tupelo Quarterly's* TQ7 Poetry Prize. A former experimental dancer and actor, she's collaborated with performers and artists, including with her filmmaker husband on text-based projects. She holds an MFA from Bennington College and lives in New York City.

The Word Works, founded in 1974, is a 501(c)3 dedicated to publishing full-length poetry collections and creating community and audience for poetry. In addition to its general interest titles, it also publishes several specialized imprints: International Editions, The Hilary Tham Capital Collection, The Washington Prize, and The Tenth Gate Prize.