

FUGITIVE ASSEMBLAGE



Jennifer Calkins

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A Novel by Jennifer Calkins

It is California, 1983. A woman pulls an IV out of her arm, walks out of the hospital, and starts driving north. She is bleeding and nauseous. There is something in the trunk of her Datsun and it's rotting. She makes her way through Big Sur and Monterey, over the mountains and into the Central Valley, looking for where to bury it—the body or the axe or the past. *Fugitive Assemblage* is lyric noir pieced together from remnant words and the blind turns of Highway 1. This haunted and haunting novel renders sensation through images and evokes grief in a dis/harmony of ghostly voices conjured from geology texts, poetry, family history, from women's diaries of the "westward journey," and from the trauma of family, of place and of love.

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ADVANCE PRAISE FOR FUGITIVE ASSEMBLAGE

Fugitive Assemblage is mysterious, restless, searching, flat out beautiful, and finally, heartbreaking. I don't think I've ever read grief in a way that feels so true. And then there is just this absolute pleasure in the language, the atmosphere, the constant move forward through the Southern California landscape and through history. Joan Didion meets Bhanu Kapil meets the films of Kelly Reichardt. It's like a long, hot day that turns into a harrowing night, and yet at the end, somehow, there is a sense of peace.

– Amina Cain, author of *Creature and Indelicacy*

Jennifer Calkins is a scientist / poet / teacher / parent and environmental lawyer. She is also blessed with the wisdom and clarity that depression instills. She paints bleak and beautiful landscapes in our brains with all of the grace and horror of Cormac McCarthy.

Fugitive Assemblage is a road story, a darkly funny odyssey in a Datsun careening thru a desert apocalyptic California haunted by ancestral demons.

This is Jennifer's best work to date.

Get in the Datsun.

– Thor Harris, of *The Swans* and author of the graphic novel *Ocean of Despair*

Tracing and butting up: blood lines, boundary lines, familial lineages, the lines on maps. Calkins reveals the unresolved, the lost, the inaccessible, and the lingering of the fugitive assemblage which is grief and journey and rupture and self.

Oh, dear reader, how do I even attempt to describe the breathlessness and devastation felt while navigating this heartbreaking and tender text?

Fugitive Assemblage is piercing and marvelous. Autumn approaches and I sit at my desk alone, weeping.

– Janice Lee, author of *The Sky Isn't Blue*, Executive Editor of *Entropy*, Co-Founder of *The Accomplices*

Jennifer Calkins is a writer, attorney and evolutionary biologist. She is the author of the book *A Story of Witchery* (Les Figues Press) and the chapbook *Devil Card* (Beard of Bees Press). Between 2010 and 2015 she produced *The Quail Diaries*, an interdisciplinary project melding science and lyric essay. Her most recent creative works are published in *The Fanzine*, *Entropy*, *Queen Mob's Teahouse* and *Quarterly West*. She lives in Seattle with creatures including teenagers.



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